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# Contemporary History as Transatlantic Project: Autobiographical Reflections on the German Problem, 1960-2010

Konrad H. Jarausch\*

**Abstract:** *»Zeitgeschichte als transatlantisches Projekt: Autobiographische Überlegungen zur deutschen Frage«.* This autobiographical retrospective discusses Konrad Jarausch's scholarship as an example of the topical and methodological development of contemporary history. In contrast to nationally bound scholars, his career in the United States and involvement in German debates illuminates the transatlantic connections of historicizing the recent past. The need to confront the Nazi dictatorship initially privileged political history, but the societal upheavals of the 1960 shifted interests towards quantitative methods and the new social history. The peaceful revolution of 1989 then challenged historians to establish a nuanced interpretation of the GDR in scholarship and memory culture. At the same time the cultural turn called for an engagement with postmodern methods of narratology, transforming theoretical approaches towards constructivism. The growing sensitivity towards the European and global embeddedness of the German past finally inspired a move towards transnational perspectives. This intellectual trajectory is therefore emblematic of successive changes which opened contemporary history towards a new plurality.

**Keywords:** contemporary history, Nazi dictatorship, social history, quantitative methods, cultural turn, GDR history, memory politics, transnational history.

Academic autobiographies are a rare genre, since interest in the lives of scholars tends to be limited. Unlike retired politicians who have public secrets to sell or movie stars who can "kiss and tell" about their sexual adventures, academics have few titillating revelations to offer. Only unusual intellectual achievements like the work of the historian Friedrich Meinecke would justify such a venture. Also extraordinary stories of émigrés from Nazi Germany such as the life of George Mosse might arouse curiosity. Or personal experiences which provide insights into political changes such as Fritz Stern's account of five different Germanys could intrigue readers. While most memoirs tend to present a career as a success story, they also require their author to review the

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crucial decisions of a lifetime.<sup>1</sup> By risking to recount my scholarly autobiography, I hope that it will not just be of personal interest but shed light on larger historiographical issues.

In many ways, my academic career and intellectual oeuvre illustrate the dynamic development of contemporary history. In the early 1960s the Nazi past inspired historians on both sides of the Atlantic to do political research into the causes of the Second World War or the structure of Hitler's dictatorship. With the generational revolt methodological perspectives shifted towards social history, leading to the application of quantitative methods and the importation of social science theory. But in the 1980s, the rise of postmodernism overthrew the historical social science paradigm and initiated a cultural turn towards every-day history, women's experience and cultural studies. Moreover, the surprising fall of Communism opened up another whole field of GDR research and work on comparative dictatorship. Finally, globalization triggered transnational studies and efforts to Europeanize the German past [...].<sup>2</sup> Partly by reacting to such developments, and partly also by pushing them further, I have been intimately involved in these successive methodological shifts.

What also sets me apart from the trajectory of most other historians is my transatlantic perspective, teaching and writing in two languages and on both continents. On the one hand, this double vision has freed me from the apologetic impulses of nationalism that have sought to relativize German responsibility for the atrocities of the twentieth century. But on the other hand, my European background has made me question self-righteous American clichés about continental transgressions which were intended to gloss over their own imperfections. This bicultural viewpoint has made me a double outsider, not completely at home in either context; but I have become also enough of an insider on both sides so as to understand their peculiarities. The result of such marginality has been a critical distance that enabled me to transcend prevailing discourses by discerning their limitations.<sup>3</sup> But the twofold sense of belonging has also created the challenge of explaining one context to the other, propelling me into the role of a cultural intermediary.

At the same time my experience reflects the transformation of historical scholarship from individual research into a collaborative enterprise. While

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Meinecke, *Erlebtes, 1862-1901*, Leipzig 1941; George L. Mosse, *Confronting History: A Memoir*, Madison 2000; and Fritz Stern, *Five Germanys I Have Known*, New York 2006. The following notes are merely intended to be suggestive rather than comprehensive.

<sup>2</sup> Christoph Klessmann, *Divided Past: Rewriting Postwar German History*, Oxford 2001; and Hans-Peter Schwarz, Die neueste Zeitgeschichte. Muss der Begriff Zeitgeschichte neu definiert werden? *VfZ* 51 (2001), 5ff.

<sup>3</sup> Arndt Bauerkämper, Konrad H. Jarausch and Markus Payk, eds., *Demokratiewunder. Transatlantische Mittler und die kulturelle Öffnung Westdeutschlands 1945-1970*, Göttingen 2005.

scholars have always exchanged ideas, the electronic discussion networks H-German and H-Soz-u-Kult that I helped to initiate have greatly intensified communication. I have also been fortunate to be able to work with numerous outstanding colleagues who have co-authored and co-edited books with me. Moreover, at several institutes of advanced studies I have learned much from other fellows who opened new methodological and thematic horizons for me. At the same time I have been able to direct research in institutions like the Center for European Studies at UNC or the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung in Potsdam. Finally, involvement in associations like the German Studies Association, Conference Group for Central European History and the Friends of the German Historical Institute has taught me that scholarship is dependent upon collegiality and infrastructure support.<sup>4</sup>

In the following pages I offer a condensed overview of my scholarly development as a window on the changing approaches to the German problem during the past half-century. I shall focus mainly on my published books, since they provide a record of sustained engagement with specific methods and intellectual problems, and cite their reviews so as to give a sense of the reaction of the field. In order to document the succession of my concerns, this volume also contains more than a dozen selected articles that illustrate certain approaches or made important contributions to the discussion of a question. To explain the shifts of topics and methods, I shall provide a bit of discursive context without any pretense at completeness. From time to time, it will also be necessary to refer to changes in institutional settings, though I shall limit these comments to bare essentials. But, my private life shall remain just that – namely private. The result will be an academic autobiography that interprets its particular trajectory as part of a more general pattern.

## 1. Making a Historian

On August 14, 1941, the day of the proclamation of the Atlantic Charter, I was born in Magdeburg, an industrial city with a medieval core at the Elbe River. My father, who had obtained a PhD in history and German, taught at the Cathedral School, instructed teachers of Protestant religion and co-edited the journal *Schule und Evangelium*. Drafted into the army reserves, he participated in the conquest of Poland, trained recruits and served in a transit camp for Russian POWs where he died of typhoid fever in January 1942. Since I never saw him, he became a mythical figure to be emulated.<sup>5</sup> My widowed mother, who had gained an MA in French and Religion, struggled to support her child,

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<sup>4</sup> See my short CV in this volume.

<sup>5</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Klaus J. Arnold, eds., “*Stilles Sterben...*” *Feldpostbriefe von Konrad Jarausch aus Polen und Russland 1939-1942*, Paderborn 2008.

since she had had to cease teaching due to the prohibition of double earners in the Third Reich. Her brother, the controversial historian Franz Petri who had written on the Franco-German language frontier, sought to shape my intellectual development, while my father's brother, the trade-school teacher Bruno provided more human support. Like thousands of others, I was therefore one of the "children of the war."

In contrast to more fortunate classmates, growing up as a half-orphan meant displacement from home and loss of social status. To escape the intensifying bombing raids of the Allies, my mother evacuated us to a small village in Lower Bavaria, where a former pupil welcomed us to her farm. Since she could not return to our destroyed Magdeburg apartment, she began to teach again in 1945 in a one-room rural school, moving a year later to the Protestant seminary and hospital in Neuendettelsau. To escape from its hunger and strictness, my mother then joined a private girls' high-school in Schauenstein (Upper Franconia), directed by the progressive Baroness von Löffelholz, where she could resume more intellectual pursuits. Only in 1950 did she manage to obtain a regular teaching position in the Ricarda-Huch-Lyzeum in the Rhenish city of Krefeld where she taught until her death in 1965. To facilitate the transition, I was put into the Protestant boarding school in Meisenheim am Glan in the Palatinate, where I had to make my way alone.<sup>6</sup>

Once I rejoined my mother in Krefeld, my adolescence developed in a fairly conventional manner during the 1950s. Due to our limited means, we rented a small apartment, but compensated by frequent travels to relatives and across the border to France and Holland. Moreover, we often went to the theater and even saw Gustav Gründgens perform in Düsseldorf, visited the modern art gallery Haus Lange and called on painters whose works my mother collected. To make up for the lack of a male role model, I participated in intramural and inter-school track and soccer competitions. But more important were the Protestant Boy Scouts (CP), where I soon became a leader of a troop that went hiking, bicycling and camping on the weekends. In 1957 we traveled to England for the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the scouts and a year later we paddled down the Rhone River from Geneva all the way to Marseille.<sup>7</sup> Though I even participated in cotillion, girls still remained a mystery for me since I was the youngest member of my class.

Most waking hours were, however, taken up by the demands of the challenging neo-humanist curriculum of the Ernst Moritz Arndt Gymnasium. With nine years of Latin and six years of Greek plus several years of French and

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<sup>6</sup> Lou Seegers and Jürgen Reulecke, eds., *Die "Generation der Kriegskinder."* *Historische Hintergründe und Deutungen*, Giessen 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Werner Stenmans, *60 Jahre evangelisches Pfadfinden in Krefeld. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Verbandes Christlicher Pfadfinderinnen und Pfadfinder (VCP) 1951-2001*, Krefeld 2011.

English, this high school introduced pupils into the classics through the study of languages. It also presented the German canon in literature, music and art, while offering mathematics and science at a fairly high level. Decimated by the Second World War, the faculty consisted of impressive personalities, including returned retirees, former Nazis and apolitical scholars, but a few of the younger teachers like Rudolf Lauterbach and Wilhelm Kuypers conveyed more critical approaches. Making friends with classmates such as Rainer Haerten and Peter Mennenöh, I had some initial difficulties in keeping up, but later on did quite well, becoming the spokesman of the Protestant minority. Everything pointed towards fulfilling my mother's expectations and stepping into my father's footsteps by becoming a Protestant divine.<sup>8</sup>

A severe adolescent crisis, which anticipated the later youth revolt of 1968, derailed such well laid plans. Part of the problem was intellectual, since reading Sartre essays, seeing Beckett plays, and looking at Bergman films raised existentialist questions about Protestant faith. Another part of the confusion was stylistic, as jeans, rock-music and mopeds did not fit the life-reform abstinence of the scouts, inherited from the Youth Movement. The final part of the issue was political because increasing revelations of Hitler's aggression and genocide made it impossible to retain pride in Germany, triggering confrontations with Franz Petri who had served in the military government of Belgium. As a result I was no longer willing to respect the authority of the older generation which had destroyed and divided Germany with its support of the Third Reich. Things came to a head in the oral *Abitur* examination, when Teipel, the director, punished my unruliness by lowering my German grade due to inadequate answers to impossible questions.<sup>9</sup>

Instead of beginning my studies in Tübingen, I therefore decided to take the boat across the Atlantic in order to explore the New World. With the sponsorship of the composer Gerhard Krapf I was able to get a job in campus gardens in Laramie/Wyoming during the summer of 1960. Though English was my fifth foreign language, I attended some public lectures in American Studies at the University of Wyoming and found the subject so fascinating that I stayed on in order to study there. College life in the US was more fun than in Germany because I could play on the university soccer team and become a ski-instructor at the Snowy Range. In order to connect to other undergraduates I even joined the Phi Delta Theta fraternity, started dating American girls and became a member of the student senate. With the help of a used VW bug, shipped over from Germany, I was able to explore some of the vast country.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *Reluctant Accomplice: A Wehrmacht Soldier's Letters from the Eastern Front*, Princeton 2011, 35-40.

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication from Reinhard Pelz after looking at the school files.

<sup>10</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, "Der Wilde Westen ist zivilisiert" and "Krefelder erlebt USA-Wahlfieber," in *Rheinische Post*, Juli 26 and November 8, 1960.

Though I remained a foreign student, the years in Laramie started a subtle process of Americanization.

Being in the US was a liberating experience because there I could reinvent myself by throwing off the problematic baggage of my Germanness. In contrast to feeling hemmed in on the continent, the wide-open spaces of the West inspired a new sense of freedom and mobility. Unlike the shadow of historical guilt over Germany, the generally affirmative presentation of American history and politics suggested a happier trajectory for the past. In distinction to the formality of European society, the friendliness of my host family for a semester, the Jacobys, implied an easier form of social intercourse. Of course the tutelage of dedicated teachers like Larry Gelfand and Bill Steckel also helped initiate me into American history. At Wyoming studying was so interesting that I applied myself, and graduated after three years with virtually a four-point grade average as co-valedictorian and member of Phi Beta Kappa.<sup>11</sup> Such success inspired me to go to graduate school in the US, underestimating how that decision would alter my entire life.

As a result, I became an inadvertent emigrant, part of the last large German group of immigrants into the US after the Second World War.<sup>12</sup> While I did not have to flee from Hitler, the death of my father and the displacement to Krefeld where I never felt completely at home cut bonds that might otherwise have kept me in Germany. As an unruly adolescent I felt stifled by the provincial authoritarianism of the Adenauer era, without sufficiently appreciating that socio-cultural changes were underway that would make the Federal Republic more liberal. Also the summers spent at the YMCA camp Manitowish in Wisconsin, in construction labor in Milwaukee and in a cross-country car trip with my mother from the East Coast to the Rockies, impressed upon me the dynamism and diversity of the US, since I failed to understand the invisible fences of class and convention that divided it. By distancing myself physically and psychologically from my origins, I gradually grew ready to confront the German problem again – from afar.

In contrast to the abruptness of the transatlantic transplantation, my interest in history grew so gradually that it ultimately seemed self-evident that I would seek to become a historian. Fortunately, I was not talented enough to succeed as a painter and entering a diplomatic career required studying law which I found too boring. Since my father, mother and uncle were all trained in history, the choice of subject was almost over-determined, but it remained to be seen whether I would be able to become a university professor. The deep past had

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<sup>11</sup> <<http://www.uwyo.edu/>>. Half a century later I was invited back as a “distinguished alumnus.”

<sup>12</sup> In contrast to the earlier migration, this last group has not yet been studied. Cf. Günter Moltmann, ed., *Germans to America: 300 Years of Immigration, 1683 to 1983*, Stuttgart 1983.

always attracted me through its cathedrals, castles and patrician houses that suggested a romantic escape into a less problematic time. But the more recent effects of history were also ubiquitous in the destroyed cities, the division of the country and the international disapproval of Germany. Studying the historical record was therefore a way of finding out about the reasons for the discrepancy between a partly glorious past and a largely problematic present. The only question was where and how to do it.

## 2. Priority of Politics

Due to the Third Reich's impact upon my own life, I was mainly interested in contemporary history, which was just beginning to emerge as separate field in the 1960s. While older historians remained wary of dealing with a period through which they had lived themselves, the capture and microfilming of German documents, speeded up by the need for evidence in prosecuting Nazi criminals, attracted younger scholars on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the establishment of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich in 1949 as well as the founding of a new *Journal of Contemporary History* in 1966 provided a further stimulus. The chief questions, addressed by scholars like Karl Dietrich Bracher, Martin Broszat or Gerhard Weinberg, centered on the reasons for the collapse of the Weimar Republic, the structure of the NS dictatorship or the causes of World War Two. Since almost every month brought startling new discoveries, it went without saying that graduate students would also embrace political and diplomatic approaches.

Fortunately, I was trained at one of the most exciting US institutions, the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Located in the Midwest between beautiful lakes, this public institution was inspired by the "progressive ethos" of combining innovative scholarship with social service. Unlike the elitist Ivy League universities, its historians were willing to take a chance on a young German from Wyoming of all places, offering me a full first year fellowship. I was assigned to work with the Jewish social historian Theodore S. Hamerow from whom I learned careful craftsmanship and interpretative balance. Even more exciting was the culture war between the liberal cultural historian George Mosse and the Communist social historian Harvey Goldberg.<sup>14</sup> It was also fun to argue about the German past with fellow students like James F. Harris, Stan Zucker or David Hackett. Finally, with the radicals of the eating cooperative "Green Lantern" I passionately discussed the "freedom summers" of the Civil Rights Movement as well as opposition to the US intervention in Vietnam.

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<sup>13</sup> Astrid M. Eckert, *Kampf um die Akten. Die Westalliierten und die Rückgabe von deutschem Archivgut nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Stuttgart 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Mosse, *Confronting History*, and <<http://www.wisc.edu/>>.



The first product of this training was my MA thesis on the diplomatic response to Hitler's seizure of power in 1933. Why did the League of Nations not stop the Nazi dictator in his tracks when he was still too weak to fight? One of the chief reasons for inaction was Benito Mussolini's proposal of a Four Power Pact that sought to reestablish a Great Power directory of Britain, France, Germany and Italy in order to resolve the diplomatic and economic differences between the victors and losers of the First World War. In researching the German foreign office documents on microfilm and the published diplomatic correspondence of the other three countries I was shocked by the clarity with which Western ambassadors in Berlin analyzed the Nazi threat and the dilatory reaction of political leaders in Paris and London, who wanted to avoid a confrontation. Though the Four Power Pact is justly forgotten as an episode of diplomacy, its negotiations gave Hitler time to consolidate his power and prevented a united anti-revisionist front.<sup>15</sup>

During the summer of 1964 I returned to Germany in order to see whether I could pursue an academic career in my native country. Although I was granted an audience with Theodor Schieder, the doyen of the German guild in Cologne, I was unable to connect to this rotund scholar in a three piece suit. More inspiring was the Otto Suhr Institut at the Free University of Berlin where I talked to the controversial assistant Ekkehart Krippendorf and listened to lectures by remigrants like Ernst Fraenkel or Richard Löwenthal.<sup>16</sup> Since Cologne would only recognize four of my eight semesters and the FU took months to decide before accepting my American MA, I found myself back as a teaching assistant in Madison in the fall, convinced that younger scholars had more opportunities in the States. The sudden death of my mother in 1965 further weakened my emotional bonds to my home. Finally, a blind date with Hannelore Louise Flessa, a budding scholar of 18th century France, proved decisive in 1966, since she was kind enough to marry me a year later.

Proof of the correctness of the decision to stay in the US was the publication of the MA thesis as my first book as *The Four Power Pact, 1933*. It was an exciting moment for a 25-year old to see his revised text printed in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin series in 1965. The biggest surprise was the attention it drew from established scholars. Wolfgang Schieder regretted that I had not had access to unpublished Italian documents, but called the volume nonetheless "meritorious." Andreas Hillgruber pronounced it an "extraordinarily thorough study" and "a first step towards intensive research of international politics of the years after 1933." Rene Albrecht-Carrié similarly judged it "a judicious assessment of an episode in the continuing story of how powers endeavor to deal with each other." Jacques Bariéty made the most substantial comment, clarifying French policy with new information included in the *Doc-*

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<sup>15</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Four Power Pact, 1933*, Madison 1966.

<sup>16</sup> James F. Tent, *The Free University of Berlin: A Political History*, Bloomington 1988.

*uments diplomatiques français* in preparation at the time.<sup>17</sup> Of course such praise could only encourage a young historian.

My subsequent dissertation, a political biography of Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, was an ambitious attempt to intervene in the “Fischer controversy.” In the late spring of 1964 the Hamburg historian gave a lecture in Madison during his US tour, funded by American universities since it had been cancelled by the Auswärtige Amt. Though Fischer spoke halting English and polemicized against critics who were largely unknown, I immediately sensed that German responsibility for the outbreak of World War One was a question around which much of the interpretation of twentieth century revolved. Since the fifth imperial chancellor stood at the eye of the interpretative storm, I decided to write a political biography of Bethmann Hollweg. Fortunately, I obtained access to the Riezler Diaries, the notes of his personal secretary. Moreover, Fritz Klein helped me to gain entry into the East German archives holding the domestic record.<sup>18</sup> With the Foreign Office documents and some papers from the family, this proved to be a sufficient base.

After returning from research in Germany, I completed the writing and began my first job at the University of Missouri in the fall of 1968. With new books constantly appearing, it was both exciting and exasperating to work on German policies before and during World War One. Moreover, the heated emotions of the controversy made it difficult to develop an independent interpretation that did not pander to the extremes.<sup>19</sup> Since the academic expansion of the sixties had run its course, Hannelore and I no longer obtained a position at one of the leading institutions, but were fortunate both to be employed in the same research university. At that time “Mizzou,” as it was affectionally called, was having a good phase, allowing Richard S. Kirkendall as chair to hire a number of talented colleagues. With a teaching load limited to only six hours, a dedicated scholar could do research there and Columbia was a pleasant enough town to live in. But recurrent fiscal crises limited Missouri to being “a first rate, second rate university” at best.<sup>20</sup>

The question which I sought to address in the Bethmann biography was the responsibility of a perceptive and decent statesman for the seminal catastrophe

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<sup>17</sup> Jacques Bariéty, “Les relations internationales en 1932-1933. Documents français, études étrangères,” *Revue Historique* 238 (1967), 347-64. Reviews by Rene Albrecht-Carrié, *AHR* 72 (1967), 571-72; Andreas Hillgruber, *HPB* 14 (1967); Wolfgang Schieder, *HZ* 205 (1967), 674-67; and W.V. Wallace, *International Affairs* 43 (1967), 104-05.

<sup>18</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “Der nationale Tabubruch. Wissenschaft, Öffentlichkeit und Politik in der Fischer-Kontroverse,” in Martin Sabrow, Ralph Jessen and Klaus Große Kracht, eds., *Zeitgeschichte als Streitgeschichte. Große Kontroversen nach 1945*, Munich, 2003, 20-57.

<sup>19</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “The Illusion of Limited War: Bethmann Hollweg’s Calculated Risk, July 1914,” *CEH* 2 (1969), 58-76, reprinted in this volume, was my initial intervention in the Fischer controversy.

<sup>20</sup> <<http://www.missouri.edu/>>.

of the twentieth century. In some ways the fifth chancellor was attractive, since he hailed from an ennobled banking family, learned the classics at Schulpforta, became an able administrator who steadied the flighty Kaiser and understood at least some of the reforms which were necessary. Yet, his “policy of the diagonal” failed to break the electoral deadlock in Prussia and to contain the world power dreams of the imperialists. Also his “calculated risk policy” during the July crisis contributed to unleashing the First World War, even if he succeeded in drawing the Socialists into the national community. On war aims he was a moderate, but could not prevent suicidal military policies like the attack on Verdun or unrestricted submarine warfare.<sup>21</sup> In writing about Bethmann’s partly personal, partly structural failure, I tried to work out my own ambivalence about the German past. On the one hand, I felt the need to criticize the disastrous policies of Imperial Germany, but on the other I considered it irresponsible to treat the Kaiser as if he had been Hitler.

The publication of *The Enigmatic Chancellor* by Yale University Press in 1973 produced a mixed response since its interpretations were too moderate and the author was too little known. For the partisans of Fritz Fischer like Anneliese Thimme, the daughter of the original biographer, my portrayal was like putting “new wine into old bottles,” because it was not critical enough. For scholars more sympathetic to Gerhard Ritter’s apologia like Klaus Schwabe “such an undertaking could only lead to a certainly respectable but nonetheless merely half success” within the framework of a dissertation. Yet historians who at the time belonged to neither camp like Volker Berghahn or Klaus Hildebrand praised the “comprehensive and balanced view [...] which in its analytical stance seeks to understand the domestic and international implications of its social dimension.”<sup>22</sup> With the support of a spate of articles such as the publication of a devastating memorandum by Kurt Riezler on the annexationist agitation of the Pan-Germans from the fall of 1916, the book made me a participant in one of the fundamental debates about interpretations of the German past.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Quantitative Methods

While I was still wrestling with political questions, other innovative historians were pushing into new methodological areas by importing quantitative methods

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<sup>21</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Enigmatic Chancellor: Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg and the Hubris of Imperial Germany, 1856-1921* (New Haven, 1973).

<sup>22</sup> Reviews by Volker Berghahn, *European Studies Review* 8 (1978), 497-99; Cheryl Anne Flood, *New Scholar* 2 (1973), 434-36; Klaus Hildebrand, *HZ* 219 (1974), 685-87; Christoph M. Kimmich, *AHR* 80 (1975), 1351-52; Klaus Schwabe, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 22 (1974), 462-65; and Anneliese Thimme, *JMH* 48 (1976), 732-34.

<sup>23</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “Die Alldutschen und die Regierung Bethmann Hollweg. Eine Denkschrift Kurt Riezlers vom Herbst 1916” *VfZ* 21 (1973), 435-68.

and theories from the social sciences. In France the *Annales* school was developing a *histoire serielle* in order to trace the fluctuations in the economy and population of the Mediterranean in the *longue durée*. In Great Britain demographic historians were studying parish registers in order to generate historical statistics from below for analyzing the transformation of family structures. In the US political scientists supported by the ICPSR at the University of Michigan were investigating voting patterns and the returns of the manuscript census so as to explain the evolution of mass politics. Only in Germany did the emergent “historical social science” of the Bielefeld school focus more on theory than on statistical studies of empirical phenomena. Transferring some of these new international methods to German subjects therefore seemed like a challenging opportunity.

A one year post-doctoral fellowship at the Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton University provided me with a chance to get acquainted with these initiatives in 1970/71. The early modern British historian Lawrence Stone had assembled a group of young scholars to study the development of European higher education through the method of prosopography. Other leaders of quantification such as the historical sociologist Charles Tilly and the demographer Edward Shorter were also at the Center for Advanced Studies. Though I was still finishing my *Bethmann*, the Davis Center discussions forced me to expand my horizon to the history of German higher education, since its institutions were hailed as the model for the modern research university. In this process I encountered attendance statistics which raised the problem of academic overcrowding as well as matriculation registers which held the key to establishing changes of social composition.<sup>24</sup> The year in Princeton provided both a new topic and a new method.

Actually learning how to use quantitative methods took much effort as well as patient teachers. Since I was no mathematics wizard, I had to go back to school in order to acquire a basic understanding of statistical procedures. Moreover, using the power of mainframe computers also presupposed some programming knowledge, fortunately facilitated by the appearance of statistical packages like SPSS or SAS. Sitting in on a class on quantitative methods taught by my Americanist colleague Thomas B. Alexander as well as repeated consultations with the help desk at the University of Missouri computer center gradually got the rudiments of quantification across.<sup>25</sup> One key problem was the coding of qualitative information into numerical form, since the classification decisions determined the statistical outcome. It was an adventure to carry a

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<sup>24</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “The Sources of German Student Unrest, 1815-1848,” in Lawrence Stone, ed., *The University in Society*, Princeton 1974, vol. 2: 533-69, reprinted in this volume, was my first effort in this direction.

<sup>25</sup> Walter D. Kamphoefner, “In Memoriam Thomas B. Alexander,” *OAH Newsletter*, February 2007.

deck of data cards around, punch in orders for certain procedures, read both into the machine and wait for “thick” output. All too frequently the result was “garbage in, garbage out.”

In order to stimulate the debate about quantification in Germany, I published the first reader on *Quantifizierung in der Geschichtswissenschaft* in 1976. Instead of pushing the Droste Verlag for a translation of the Bethmann biography, I suggested editing a paperback on the problems and possibilities of quantitative methods. So as to reduce skepticism against an import from abroad, I argued that these statistical techniques were nothing new or foreign, but rather a continuation of a grand German tradition begun by historical economists and sociologists at the turn of the century. In the first part of the volume, essays by Charles Tilly, Lawrence Stone and Tom Alexander made a general case for the utility of this approach. Since judging the usefulness of methods required a demonstration to be convincing, the second part presented research by historians such as Michael Kater, Hartmut Kaelble and Peter Lundgreen. This volume created somewhat of a stir, since Jürgen Kocka welcomed it in a long *HZ* review “as a successful contribution.”<sup>26</sup>

While I was retooling as a quantitative historian, I returned to Germany through a visiting professorship at the University of Saarbrücken in 1975/76. For one semester I traded places with Walter Lipgens, a historian of European integration, while a fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation funded the other two semesters of leave. Originally a post-war French foundation, the Universität des Saarlandes had reverted to Germany in 1956, thereafter favoring reconciliation with France. During this first teaching experience in my former home country I was surprised to find out how little German students read when they were supposed to discuss Hans-Ulrich Wehler’s controversial book on Imperial Germany. Nonetheless, the challenge of explaining German history to Germans inspired me to apply for a position there, landing on a divided third place on the list. When the offer of a C-4 professorship finally passed down to me, we agonized about how to respond, but ultimately decided to return to the US for the sake of our sons.

Promoting a novel approach to historical study required the creation of new organizations as forums for discussion. Even the venerable American Historical Association formed a committee on quantitative methods with which I organized several interesting conferences.<sup>27</sup> More exciting was the foundation of the Social Science History Association in 1975 by historical social scientists and

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<sup>26</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *Quantifizierung in der Geschichtswissenschaft. Probleme und Möglichkeiten*, Düsseldorf 1967. Reviews by Jürgen Kocka in the *HZ* 226 (1978), 400-03; and Peter Steinbach, *Jahrbuch der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin* 1976, 219-21.

<sup>27</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “Promises and Problems of Quantitative Research in Central European History,” *CEH* 11 (1978), 279-91, reprinted in this volume, was an effort to convince reluctant colleagues.

social scientific historians in order to “address pressing questions by combining social-science method and new forms of historical evidence.” This interdisciplinary group of innovative scholars propagated the application of quantitative methods and the testing of social theories through research on the development of populations, the transformation of social structure, the changing roles of women and the pattern of electoral politics. Within this umbrella, I created a network on the history of education that sponsored interesting discussions.<sup>28</sup> The founding of new journals like *SSH*, *JIH* and *Historical Methods* testified to the ferment of this impetus.

Training German students in social science history also needed a suitable textbook to explain the various aspects of this approach. The leading efforts by Roderick Floud or Charles Dollar and Richard Jensen reflected the early stages of the method and were focused on British as well as American research questions. Though Wilhelm Schroeder had begun to offer helpful short courses in Cologne, instructors at other institutions needed an introduction, oriented on the successive steps of research and based on SPSS. To provide such guidance, I persuaded the data base specialist Manfred Thaller, who had developed his own KLEIO system, and the social statistician Gerhard Arminger to join me in creating just such a textbook. Fortunately the Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft supported the venture so that *Quantitative Methoden in der Geschichtswissenschaft* appeared under its imprint in 1985. Christopher Friedrichs graciously called the book “a masterly introduction to the nature and principles of quantitative history.”<sup>29</sup>

Since quantitative methods were increasingly used around the globe, it seemed logical to create an organization for international communication. In Germany Heinrich Best and Wilhelm Schroeder had already founded QUANTUM and the ZHSF. Together with them I approached the International Congress of Historical Sciences as chair of the AHA Committee on Quantitative Methods to create a working group in quantitative methods, called INTERQUANT. Founded at the 1980 Congress in Bucharest, this body, in true Cold War fashion, had two co-presidents, the Soviet Academician Ivan Kovalchenko and myself, representing the US, with Schroeder as general secretary. Trying to communicate across the Iron Curtain, we created programs at subsequent congresses in Stuttgart, Madrid and Montreal. To promote such cooperation I wrote essays on the international dimension of quantitative history. With

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<sup>28</sup> <<http://www.ssha.org/about-the-ssha>>.

<sup>29</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, Gerhard Arminger, and Manfred Thaller, *Quantitative Methoden in der Geschichtswissenschaft. Eine Einführung in die Forschung, Datenverarbeitung und Statistik* (Darmstadt, 1985). Review by Christopher J. Friedrichs, *JIH* 18 (1987), 160-62. The high point of my quantification efforts was the essay with Gerhard Arminger on “German Teachers and National Socialism: A Demographic Logit Model for Party Membership,” *JIH* 22 (1989), 229-59.

Wilhelm Schroeder I also published the papers of the Stuttgart meeting as *Quantitative History of Society and Economy* in 1987.<sup>30</sup>

When older surveys grew out of date, American students of quantification started looking for a new introduction into the theory and method. Encouraged by positive reviews of the German text, I set out to provide an English version on the basis of added practical experience. In it, Kenneth Hardy, director of the statistical laboratory at the University of North Carolina, presented complex statistical procedures in a more intelligible fashion. Moreover, Dale Steinhauer, a graduate student of US history provided an American data-set in order to illustrate the research steps and statistical procedures. The UNC press published the book, *Quantitative Methods for Historians: A Guide to Research, Data and Statistics*, in 1991. While Morgan J. Kousser and John Modell found the introduction somewhat too superficial, Alan Bogue, another pioneer, called it “extremely helpful to the students and teachers of quantitative methods in history.”<sup>31</sup> This venture involved me in fascinating interdisciplinary discussions about history as social science.

A consequence of this interest was also my involvement in the founding of electronic discussion networks in the US and Germany, based on the development of the internet. Since I had already learned how to use Email during my year at the CASBS in Stanford in 1991/92, I immediately pledged my support for the plan of some UNC graduate students to create a discussion list on German history within the emerging structure of H-Net, called H-German. Hence when Karsten Borgmann asked me in 1995 whether to start similar effort in Germany, focused on promoting social and cultural approaches to history, I sent him to the statistical historian Rüdiger Hohls who took charge of the project at the Humboldt Universität. During the explosive growth of H-Soz-u-Kult, I served as link to the American H-Net and as external advisor for some of its grant applications to the DFG. It has been gratifying to see, how much the subsequent development of clio-online and Zeitgeschichte-online has revolutionized scholarly communication in our field.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Wilhelm Schroeder, eds., *Quantitative History of Society and Economy: Some International Studies* (Berlin, 1987).

<sup>31</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Kenneth A. Hardy, *Quantitative Methods for Historians*, (Chapel Hill, 1991). Reviews by J. Morgan Kousser *JH*, 23 (1992), 139-40; John Modell, *JSH* 26 (1992), 149-50; and Alan Bogue, *JAH* 89 (1994), 1569-70.

<sup>32</sup> See the websites <<http://www.h-net.org/~german/>>; <<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/index.asp?pn=about>>; and <<http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/>>. In 2010 I was elected honorary chairman of clio-online.

#### 4. New Social History

Scholars coming of age in the late sixties embraced the “new social history,” since it promised to provide more profound explanations for changes than research on domestic or international politics. Influenced by the New Left and spurred on by the generational rebellion, the followers of Eric Hobsbawm or E. P. Thompson studied “history from below” so as to give the mute masses a voice and agency in interpreting the past. In Germany Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Jürgen Kocka developed a related concept of “historical social science” in collected volumes and a new journal, programmatically entitled *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*. As a Weberian alternative to East German Marxism, they stressed modernization deficits which made German development take a “special path” that deviated from the Western pattern of democracy.<sup>33</sup> Part of this effort was a new history of education, investigated with quantitative methods, which would allow historians to intervene in contemporary discussions by revealing the underlying structures of inequality.

The question which I set out to address was the relationship between the social selection and ideological outlook of the German elite trained during the Empire, but responsible for the fateful decisions in 1914 and 1933. By a secondary analysis of Prussian census statistics I sought to shed light on the rapid expansion of student enrollments, while I quantified the matriculation register of Bonn University to reconstruct the concurrent transformation of the student body in terms of secondary schooling, religious affiliation, gender composition and social background. For qualitative evidence on educational policy I turned to the Prussian records in Potsdam and Merseburg, for festival rhetoric and associations to the university archives at Berlin and Marburg, and for student subculture to the corporation records at the Institut für Hochschulkunde in Würzburg. While the coding, running and interpreting the quantitative data took years, a fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D. C. provided a hospitable setting for the completion of the manuscript.<sup>34</sup>

Published in 1982 by Princeton University Press, *Students, Society and Politics in Imperial Germany* was immediately recognized as a major contribution. In her review Kathryn Olesko summarized its explanation of the rightward turn of academic culture as result of

an enrollment explosion, the increased social stratification of student societies, the right-wing and illiberal orientation of corporate student organizations, the repression of democratic political expressions by ministerial regulations, and

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<sup>33</sup> Georg G. Iggers, *The Social History of Politics: Critical Perspectives in West German Historical Writing Since 1945*, Dover, NH 1985.

<sup>34</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *Students, Society and Politics in Imperial Germany: The Rise of Academic Illiberalism*, Princeton 1982. Cf. idem, “Frequenz und Struktur. Zur Sozialgeschichte der Studenten im Kaiserreich,” in Peter Baumgart, ed., *Staat und Bildung in Preussen und im deutschen Kaiserreich*, Stuttgart 1980, 110-149, reprinted in this volume.



finally the increasingly professional and positivistic orientation of university learning that eroded the liberality of *Bildung*.

While some reviewers complained about its “positivism”, the “maddening footnotes,” “a weak central thesis,” and its “eclecticism,” most praised the book as “a standard work,” “a prodigious research effort,” “a thoughtful and well executed volume,” and “a major contribution,” with “stupendously rich material.” Though criticizing the term “illiberalism,” Geoff Eley called it “the most important book on Imperial Germany to come out of North America since the beginning of serious work in the archives.”<sup>35</sup>

In order to test the *Sonderweg* thesis, I also tried to stimulate comparative discussion about *The Transformation of Higher Learning* through a conference at the University of Missouri in 1980. Instead of working with published statistics like Fritz Ringer, I convened sixteen scholars doing original empirical work on England, Germany and Russia as well as the US, since they represented different paths of modernization. For the sake of comparability, the symposium focused on issues regarding the expansion of enrollments, the diversification of institutional offerings, the widening of social access and the professionalization of graduates. Though the essays highlighted national differences, the basic transformation between 1860 and 1930 seemed similar: “A small, homogeneous, elite, and pre-professional university turned into a large, diversified, middle-class and professional system of higher learning.” Despite the disparity of the sources, reviewers found the collection “valuable” – and it was eventually even translated into Japanese!<sup>36</sup>

This comparative work on educational sociology brought me into contact with German colleagues who were doing research on similar questions. With the help of the German Research Council, Detlev K. Müller had put together a massive project on “qualification crises” which sought to explain academic overcrowding by editing a series of handbooks of historical statistics. While his own team in Bochum worked on primary schools, Peter Lundgreen compiled data on secondary institutions in Bielefeld and Hans-Georg Herrlitz and Hartmut Titze focused on universities in Göttingen.<sup>37</sup> In 1982/83 the latter invited

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<sup>35</sup> Geoff Eley, “Educating the Bourgeoisie: Students and the Culture of ‘Illiberalism’ in Imperial Germany,” *HEQ* 26 (1986), 287-300. Reviews by Geoffrey Giles, *GSR* 6 (1983), 332-33; Antony LaVopa, *JSH* (1984), 730-33; Mary Jo Maynes, *JIH* 15 (1984), 150-52; Kathryn Olesko, *SSH* 8 (1984), 117-20; Walter Struve, *AHR* 88 (1983), 702-03; and Klaus Schwabe, *HZ* 240 (1985), 439-42.

<sup>36</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Transformation of Higher Learning, 1860-1930: Expansion, Diversification, Social Opening, and Professionalization in England, Germany, Russia, and the United States*, first published as volume 13 of HSF, then as a book by the University of Chicago Press in 1983. Eventually the volume was even translated into Japanese. Reviews by James C. Albisetti, *JIH* 16 (1985), 136-38; and James Van Horn Melton, *JSH* 18 (1985), 652-54.

<sup>37</sup> See the *Datenhandbuch zur deutschen Bildungsgeschichte*, Göttingen 1987, for instance vol. 1.1. *Das Hochschulstudium in Preußen und Deutschland 1820 bis 1944*, ed. by Hart-

me to the institute for educational research at their institution as a DFG visiting professor. A Hanovarian foundation, the Georgia Augusta had integrated Prussian refugees after the war and possessed an innovative Max Planck Institut für Geschichte. During this stimulating sabbatical I got reacquainted with German academic culture, endlessly discussing whether it was possible to steer enrollment cycles politically.

A growing reputation finally allowed me to move out of the Midwest to the University of North Carolina, one of the leading state universities in the US. The University of Missouri was a decent enough institution with some interesting colleagues, but its fiscal limitations made for a provincial atmosphere which I found increasingly intolerable. Lightning actually struck twice: Prodded by Geoffrey Giles, the University of Florida made me an attractive offer in order to help build a research department. But at the same time UNC, founded in 1792 as oldest public institution in the US, also promised me an endowed professorship and was willing to hire Hannelore in French as well. Its 19th century German historian Lamar Cecil had just moved to a liberal arts college, but other distinguished colleagues like Gerhard Weinberg and Samuel Williamson made the department attractive. In the end, the chance to train graduate students on the basis of an excellent research library and the charming life in Chapel Hill proved irresistible.<sup>38</sup>

Another result of the Göttingen lectures was the paperback survey of *Deutsche Studenten 1800-1970*. Since a translation of my earlier monograph would not have added much, I decided instead to set the problem into a wider context, starting with the national-liberal Burschenschaft, proceeding to the anti-Semitic turn in the Empire, probing the Nazi involvement and exploring the post-war switch to leftist rebellion. I followed a triple interaction of the numerical growth and social transformation of the student body, the evolution of the associational subculture, and the resulting reversals of political allegiances. The central argument sought to explain the early Nazi victory in the student cohort with the severity of the overcrowding and the unemployment crisis of the Weimar Republic. Hans-Ulrich Wehler accepted the book into his "Neue Historische Bibliothek" where it was published with Suhrkamp in 1984. Though critics found it "somewhat superficial," it nonetheless became a standard work and continued to sell for decades.<sup>39</sup>

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mut Titze and vol. 2.1. *Datenhandbuch zur deutschen Bildungsgeschichte. Sozialgeschichte und Statistik des Schulsystems in den Staaten des Deutschen Reiches, 1800-1945*, ed. by Detlef K. Müller.

<sup>38</sup> John F. Blair, ed., *Hark the Sound of Tar Heel voices: 220 Years of UNC History*, Winston-Salem 2008. Cf. <<http://www.unc.edu/index.htm>>. I found working at UNC so congenial that I rejected a later offer from Georgetown University.

<sup>39</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *Deutsche Studenten 1800-1970*, Frankfurt 1984. Reviews by Elisabeth Fehrenbach, *HZ* 241 (1985), 646; and Andrew Lees, *JMH* 62 (1990), 202-06.

Generous funding support facilitated the transition towards research on the professions, a logical step of following student careers after graduation. A National Endowment for the Humanities grant supported research in associational and governmental records as well as the coding and processing of statistical data by Eric Yonke. In the spring of 1986 a leave at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies involved me in intense discussions with Ulrich Teichler on comparative analysis of higher education. In the summer of 1987 an invitation to Bielefeld allowed me to participate in the *Bürgertum* project, directed by Jürgen Kocka, which debated the peculiarities of the German middle class. In the fall of 1988 a stay at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Studies in Uppsala exposed me to scholars like Rolf Torstendahl and Michael Burrage, working on professions.<sup>40</sup> As a result of these leaves I was able to absorb the sociological literature and gain a broader perspective on professionalization as a transnational process.

The first product of this reorientation was a volume of essays on *German Professions, 1800-1950* which appeared with Oxford University Press in 1990. Inspired by a panel at the German Studies Association, I teamed up with Geoffrey Cocks, a historian of 20th century psychiatry, in order to explore the terrain of academic occupations in Germany. An excellent group of scholars, including Anthony La Vopa, Hannes Siegrist, Jane Caplan, Michael Geyer, Kenneth Ledford and Mitchell Ash contributed essays that ranged from successful occupations like law and medicine to failed professions like primary school-teaching or social work. Taken together the case studies of this volume suggested a German model of professionalization, distinct from Anglo-American autonomy, which relied more on the state, academic credentials and an entitlement system. While several reviewers balked at its sociologese, most like James Sheehan appreciated that the volume presented “the very best new scholarship on the German professions.”<sup>41</sup>

More tightly focused on the theme of professional complicity with National Socialism was a second monograph on *The Unfree Professions* published in the same year. It compared the development of lawyers as a classical free profession, with teachers as state officials and engineers as industrial employees. To explain their problematic trajectory between 1900 and 1950, I emphasized a

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<sup>40</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “Die unfreien Professionen. Überlegungen zu den Wandlungsprozessen im deutschen Bildungsbürgertum 1900-1955,” in Jürgen Kocka, ed., *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich*, Göttingen 1988, 2: 124-46; and Michael Burrage, Konrad Jarausch and Hannes Siegrist, “An Actor-based Framework for the Study of the Professions,” in Michael Burrage and Rolf Torstendahl, eds., *Professions in Theory and History: Rethinking the Study of the Professions*, London 1990, 203-25.

<sup>41</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Geoffrey Cocks, eds., *German Professions, 1800-1950*, New York 1990. Reviews by Mauro F. Guillen, *Contemporary Sociology* 21 (1992), 378-80; William Carl Mathews, *GSR* 15 (1992), 366-67; Paul Miranti, *Business History Review* 65 (1991), 711-13; and James J. Sheehan, *CEH* 25 (1992), 102-05.

process of neo-corporate professionalization in the Empire, a crisis of interest-group professionalism in Weimar, a process of deprofessionalization in the Third Reich and an effort at reprofessionalization in the FRG. Though their circumstances varied considerably, all three professions abandoned their liberal ethics for material self-interest in welcoming Hitler and acquiescing in the exclusion of Jews, women and democrats, showing that expertise alone was no barrier against complicity with dictatorship. Since critics found only a few bones to pick, most reviewers hailed it as “a widely researched and persuasively argued treatment.” Even some sociologists took notice of it and Christophe Charle called for a French equivalent.<sup>42</sup>

This work on students and professions also motivated me to get engaged in professional organizations in order to promote German Studies in the United States. In the Conference Group for Central European History, I served first as Secretary (1983-87) and eventually as Chairman, helping to create the Hans Rosenberg prize and to revitalize its journal. When I was elected president of the interdisciplinary German Studies Association in 1985/86, I worked to make this regional group of Western scholars into a national association, strengthening its ties to Germany as well. In order to support the new German Historical Institute in Washington, I co-founded a group of its friends in 1991, linking it to the leading scholarly associations, and serving as its president for several years.<sup>43</sup> Due to this exposure I was also named to editorial boards of journals, invited to fellowship selections and asked to review manuscripts. These time-consuming duties were nonetheless satisfying, since they shored up the infrastructure for scholarship.

Research on German universities and professions also motivated me to speak out on transatlantic issues concerning higher education and professional ethics. Was it not ironic that in the 19th century about 12,000 Americans had studied in Germany, while after 1945 German students had to be invited to the US so as to rebuild democracy? Because leading American institutions had managed to find a productive compromise between mass attendance of undergraduates and elite training of PhDs, I increasingly recommended a selective borrowing of features from this model to German audiences who were not always pleased to hear such advice. In other lectures such as a talk at the Holo-

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<sup>42</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions: German Lawyers, Teachers and Engineers, 1900-1950*, New York 1990. Reviews by Christophe Charle, *Annales* 48 (1993), 70-72; Eliot Friedson, *Contemporary Sociology*, 20 (1991), 683-85; Kees Gispens, *JIH* 22 (1992), 520-22; Kenneth F. Ledford, *GSR* 15 (1992), 409-11; Jeffrey Johnson, *JSH* 26 (1992), 192-94; Charles McClelland, *JMH* 65 (1993), 656-59; Irmgard Steinisch, *HEQ* 32 (1992), 262-64; and Lawrence D. Stokes, *AHR* 98 (1993), 193-94.

<sup>43</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “Perils of Professionalism: Lawyers, Teacher and Engineers in Nazi Germany,” *GSR* 9 (1986, 107-137 was my presidential address to the GSA, reprinted in this volume. For the organizations see <<http://www.centraleuropeanhistory.org/>>; <<http://www.thegsa.org/>>; <<http://www.ghi-dc.org/>>.

caust Museum I pointed to the ethical problem of having material interest override moral concerns that led academics into NS-complicity. As I have grown more and more concerned about the widening cultural distance between both sides of the Atlantic, I have also repeatedly called for renewed efforts at transatlantic dialogue.<sup>44</sup>

## 5. Current History

Just when everything had settled into a predictable routine, the collapse of Communism scrambled all well-laid plans by demanding a historical explanation. Watching the mass exodus and demonstrations from afar, I marveled at the civic courage of the protesters. When my son told me that he had just seen the fall of the Wall on TV, I could hardly believe the news, since this ugly barrier had symbolized the immovability of the Iron Curtain for decades. During the tug of war between opposition demands and regime concessions, I feared that some fool might fire a shot and trigger a bloody repression by the Stasi or the Red Army. But when the East Germans voted for and the two-plus-four negotiations actually confirmed reunification, I was overjoyed since it gave a suppressed people the chance for a better life. Already during these exciting events, it was clear that something incredible was happening that would constitute a historic watershed. The peaceful revolution challenged historians to explain its causes and consequences.

Always fascinated by the socialist experiment in the GDR, I seized upon the chance of a life-time to participate in shaping the transition from current events into history. Due to my birth in Magdeburg I had retained some cross-border ties, and had several times worked in the East German archives. From 1987 on I co-chaired a bilateral US-GDR commission on history sponsored by the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), and organized conferences on National Socialism in East Berlin and Princeton.<sup>45</sup> Fortuitously, we bought a small apartment in Berlin in the summer of 1989 from an inheritance of my father's brother. Hence in December 1989 I flew over to chip some fragments from the now porous Wall, returning in the summer of 1990 to witness its demolition. During the summer of 1991 I traded places with Werner Bramke

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<sup>44</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, "Vorbild Amerika. Schwierigkeiten transatlantischen Borgens bei der Universitätsreform," in Manfred Rudersdorf, Wolfgang Höpken and Martin Schlegel, eds., *Wissen und Geist. Universitätskulturen*, Leipzig 2009; idem, "The Conundrum of Complicity: German Professionals and the Final Solution," lecture at US Holocaust Memorial Museum Washington 2001; and idem, "Drifting Apart: Cultural Dimensions of the Transatlantic Estrangement," in Hermann Kurthen, Andonio V. Mendendez-Alarcon and Stefan Immerfall, eds., *Safeguarding German-American Relations in the New Century*, Lanham MD 2006, 17-32.

<sup>45</sup> <<http://www.irex.org/>>. Cf. Konrad H. Jarausch, "Nazi Terror and Resistance: Conference Report, *IREX-Newsletter*, November 1989.

and spent a semester in Leipzig to witness the changes. Finally, the DAAD exchange professor Christiane Lemke encouraged me to run the risk of venturing into the unknown field of GDR history.<sup>46</sup>

The first product of this new interest was a volume of documents on *Die Deutsche Vereinigung*, collected already during the process as information base. In editing these sources, I worked together with the German social scientist Volker Gransow who helped familiarize me with the GDR literature. We included a skeleton of official texts such as programmatic announcements, communiqués, and treaties, but also supplemented them with a colorful mixture of commentary from different ideological positions and some reports representing actual experiences. The German version with the Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik came out already in 1991. Günter Heydemann welcomed it in the *Historische Zeitschrift* as “immediately useful and employable for scholarly purposes.”<sup>47</sup> The English language version of *Uniting Germany* with Berghahn Books took three more years, as we added a seventh chapter on unification consequences. It did not arouse much commentary, but sold briskly, since it proved to be a good teaching tool.<sup>48</sup>

With this slim backing I embarked upon an ambitious project of writing a history of German unification close to the events in order to satisfy a widespread desire for a coherent account. Because Westerners could not get at its primary sources, there was virtually no GDR history in the FRG, while in the English speaking world the country was neglected by Slavic-oriented Sovietology.<sup>49</sup> But the collapse of the SED-dictatorship made available a trove of party, government and secret police records, even if their West German counterparts remained off limits. Therefore I fleshed out the official record with press coverage collected by the Bundespresseamt and with interviews ranging from Lothar de Maizière to Gregor Gysi. The methodological challenge consisted of grounding the necessary reconstruction of political events in a societal analysis and sensitivity to cultural experiences. Fortunately, a stimulating year spent at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford in 1991/92 provided the leisure for the writing.

*The Rush to German Unity* attempted to trace an unlikely trajectory of events, provide a balanced judgment and suggest a reasonable explanation. For this purpose, I divided the story into three stages: The first part centered on the

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<sup>46</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “The Failure of East German Anti-Fascism: Some Ironies of History as Politics,” *GSR* 14 (1991), 85-102, reprinted in this volume, was an exploratory effort.

<sup>47</sup> Volker Gransow and Konrad H. Jarausch, eds., *Die deutsche Vereinigung. Dokumente zu Bürgerbewegung, Annäherung und Beitritt*, Köln 1991. Review by Günter Heydemann, *HZ* 258 (1994), 274-75.

<sup>48</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Volker Gransow, eds., *Uniting Germany: Documents and Debates, 1944-1993*, New York 1994.

<sup>49</sup> The surveys by Hermann Weber, *Die DDR 1945-1986*, Munich 1988 and Dieter Staritz, *Geschichte der DDR 1945-1985*, Frankfurt 1985 were written by political scientists.

mass exodus, the growth of protests and the overthrow of Honecker; the second section focused on the Round Table talks, the collapse of regime support and the vote for unity; and the final section dealt with the currency union, the accession negotiations and the actual unification. As interpretation I proposed the concept of a peaceful revolution, evolving from civil society beginnings through a national turn to a social transformation. Starting with GDR citizens, I broadened the perspective to the Kohl government and the international community. Upon publication with Oxford University Press in 1994, some critics objected to the breathlessness of the text, looking for more theoretical analysis. But most reviewers lauded the clarity, readability and comprehensiveness of the “compelling narrative.” The German sociologist Karl-Ulrich Mayer graciously called it “the best available book on the German events of 1989.”<sup>50</sup>

This positive reception encouraged me to attempt a German version, in the hope that my transatlantic distance might contribute to calming the *querelles allemandes*. While the CDU and the SPD disputed the credit for unification, disappointed dissidents distanced themselves from their revolution, and the SED *nomenklatura* protested against its loss of privileges. In order to improve the original text, I did additional research in the Stasi archives, included the new secondary literature and talked with many colleagues about their impressions. Hence, I sharpened the introductory reflections on the role of a historian in the process of turning the present into the past, calling for a “critical historicization” of the GDR in order to transcend the heated partisanship. When the Suhrkamp Verlag published the rewritten German text as *Die unverhoffte Einheit 1989-1990* in 1995, *Die Zeit* hailed it as “all in all a successful book.” Due to its transatlantic detachment, the book found an eager readership, with a second edition quickly printed.<sup>51</sup>

Involvement in these debates eventually drew me back to Germany through the co-directorship of the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung in Potsdam. This new institute was a fascinating laboratory of unification, since it combined positively evaluated members of the East German Academy like Joachim Petzold with innovative Western scholars like Martin Sabrow and Thomas

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<sup>50</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Rush to German Unity*, New York 1994. Cf. Gordon A. Craig, “United We Fall,” *NYRB*, January 13, 1994, 36-40. Reviews by Michael Bernhard, *Slavic Review* 54 (1995), 138-39; Nevil Johnson, *English Historical Review* 112 (1997), 271-72; Karl-Ulrich Mayer, *Contemporary Sociology* 24 (1995), 221-21; Diethelm Prowe, *AHR* 100 (1995), 546; Fritz Stern, *Foreign Affairs* 73 (1994), 171; and John Torpey, *GSR* 18 (1995), 378-79.

<sup>51</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *Die unverhoffte Einheit*, Frankfurt 1995. Reviews by Rudolf Grosskopf, *Die Zeit*, 28.7.1995; Ralph Hanselle, *Financial Times Deutschland*, 21.1.1995; Hermann Rudolph, *TS*, 19.1.1995; Elke Schubert, *FR*, 27.1.2005; Ole Wackermann, *Deutschlandfunk*, 14.2.1995. *Der Spiegel* used the title for its series at the tenth anniversary in 1999.

Lindenberger.<sup>52</sup> I first participated in its intense discussions in the summer of 1992, and returned in 1994/5 as a visiting fellow with leadership tasks in support of the new director Christoph Klessmann. Coming back during the following summers, I applied for the other directorship position, designed to spread the work-load between co-equal directors. Since I beat out the renowned Lutz Niethammer in a tight competition, I was appointed to the position in 1998. This was an inexpensive solution for the state of Brandenburg, as I spent eight months of the year in Potsdam, and four in Chapel Hill in order to retain my chaired professorship at UNC.

The eight exciting years at the ZZF were focused on establishing a nuanced interpretation of GDR history and on making the institute permanent. Both tasks were linked since Eastern dissidents of the Unabhängige Historikerverband (UHV) as well as Western cold warriors of the SED-Forschungsverbund publicly attacked the fledgling institution. More dangerous was the rivalry with the powerful Institut für Zeitgeschichte which pushed a traditional totalitarianism paradigm in its Berlin dependency. In contrast, the ZZF promoted a differentiated approach, combining an emphasis on dictatorship with stress on everyday life. Most trying was the uncertainty of funding which made it necessary to apply to the DFG every two or three years for 25 to 40 research positions in proposals that grew from a few hundred to well over one thousand pages. The decisions of the visiting review teams were not always intelligible. But in 2006 efforts to obtain security finally succeeded, when the ZZF was accepted into the Leibniz Association (WGL), a national group of research institutes.<sup>53</sup>

The cooperative environment of the ZZF inspired a spate of books trying to integrate the East German experience into post-war history. The first was a volume on *Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung* which analyzed the competing influences of the two hegemonial powers between 1945 and 1970. In it the cultural historian Hannes Siegrist and I sought to pose a comparative question which would de-emotionalize the normative juxtaposition of democracy and dictatorship by looking at the contrasting efforts to reshape the Germans in West and East. While the concept of Americanization was widely, though imprecisely, used to suggest the transformation of popular culture and consumption, the notion of Sovietization had to be rescued from anti-Communist rhetoric. In empirical studies on politics, economy, society and culture, the essays sought to reveal the asymmetries between soft US influence and hard

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<sup>52</sup> <<http://www.zzf-pdm.de/Default.aspx>>. See the entry under "Geschichte". For an evaluation of the ZZF's work see Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR*, London 2002.

<sup>53</sup> Katja Naumann's MA thesis, "Die Rezeption und Diskussion kulturhistorischer Ansätze in der Zeitgeschichtsforschung. Eine Fallstudie am Beispiel zweier Forschungsprojekte", Leipzig 2003, neglects my role, since I was in the US when she did her interviews. See Mary Fulbrook, "Politik, Wissenschaft und Moral," *GG* 22 (1996), 458-71.



Soviet power. Anselm Döring-Manteuffel correctly concluded that the collection “describes an important research area for the next years.”<sup>54</sup>

The volume *After Unity: Reconfiguring German Identities* was instead an effort to inform an English speaking audience about some of the post-unification debates. The collection responded to the German Studies Association’s wish for developing a truly interdisciplinary dialogue on the basis of shared questions. To reach this goal, I decided on an unprecedented experiment of asking a historian, a literary scholar and a social scientist to write a joint essay so as to combine their different perspectives on a specific topic. The chosen themes focused on discussions of the double burden of the past, conflicts on immigration and multiculturalism, controversies about the slow progress of unity, struggles over abortion rights and debates about the international role of united Germany. As reviewers pointed out, the level of integration and interpretative balance varied considerably between the essays. In spite of such shortcomings, Diethelm Prowe called the volume “the most successful of the post-unification efforts to assess German identities.”<sup>55</sup>

The tenth anniversary of the peaceful revolution inspired an attempt to draw a balance sheet of the historical research on internal dissolution of the GDR. Together with Martin Sabrow, I therefore edited the revised papers of a session at the Frankfurt Historikertag in 1998, entitled *Weg in den Untergang. Der innere Zerfall der DDR*. In my conceptual introduction, I tried to refute the cynical thesis of a simple collapse of Communist rule by pointing to the large popular mobilization that overthrew the SED-dictatorship. While Detlef Pollack stressed the unpredictable intertwining of a series of separate social processes, Martin Sabrow reflected on the cultural reasons for the erosion of regime loyalty. Other essays treated the liberalization of Soviet policy, the economic decline, the allure of the West, the influence of East European dissidents, the self-blockage of the secret police and the growth of an opposition. In contrast to other titles on 1989, reviewers appreciated that this volume sought to provide a more complex explanation.<sup>56</sup>

The essay collection on *Dictatorship as Experience*, published in 1999 as well, set out to historicize the GDR by “penetrating beneath the uniform surface of dictatorship.” Drawing together one decade of ZZF discussions, it also sought to make some of the new research available to an Anglo-American public. In order to transcend the totalitarianism paradigm, the introductory

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<sup>54</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Hannes Siegrist, eds., *Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung in Deutschland 1945-1970*, Frankfurt 1997. Review by Anselm Döring-Manteuffel, *HZ*, 269 (1999), 546-48.

<sup>55</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *After Unity: Reconfiguring German Identities*, New York 1997. Reviews by Diethelm Prowe, *GSR* 21 (1998), 394-95; and Hans Wagener, *German Quarterly* 71 (1998), 418-20.

<sup>56</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Martin Sabrow, eds., *Weg in den Untergang. Der innere Zerfall der DDR*, Göttingen 1999. Review by Eric Weitz, *CEH* 36 (2003), 490-94.

essays scrutinized concepts of “modern dictatorship” (Jürgen Kocka), the question of “modernization blockages” (Detlef Pollack), and the paradoxical neologism of “welfare dictatorship” (proposed by myself). The empirical contributions dealt with regime repression, social incentives, cultural stabilizers and chronological transformations. Across the different topics, the essays were united by an effort to come to grips with a regime that was at once dictatorial and egalitarian. Though not completely convinced by its concepts, reviewers like the US historian Eric Weitz and the French scholar Sandrine Kott welcomed it as “vibrant historical inquiry,” pointing in a “direction that might prove to be fruitful.”<sup>57</sup>

The fortieth anniversary of the building of the Wall also suggested that the ZZF revisit the question of responsibility after the opening of the East European archives. Hans-Hermann Hertle, a leading specialist on its fall, brought together a wide-ranging volume on *Mauerbau und Mauerfall* with the help of Christian Ostermann, the director of the Cold War International History Project in Washington. The papers were a mixture of eye-witness reports (Peter Bender, William Smyser), foreign policy analyses (Bernd Bonwetsch, Gerhard Wetzig) and social history essays (Stefan Wolle, Thomas Lindenberger), also stressing the international context. Hope Harrison made a case for Ulbricht’s initiative, though Krushchev had to approve it, while other contributors wrestled with the paradox of its short term stabilizing and long term destabilizing effect as concrete building and cultural symbol. That initiative strengthened the Berlin Senate’s resolve to develop more elaborate plans for memorializing the *Mauer*.<sup>58</sup>

The edition of the talks between Brezhnev and Honecker was a special pleasure since these protocols offered first-hand insights into the styles, concerns and world-views of both leaders. When Hans-Hermann Hertle, who had found these documents in the SED archives, asked me to co-edit them, I quickly agreed since they were a fascinating source. Between 1974 and 1982 both dictators had met for lengthy conversation in the Crimea, holding monologues and exchanging views. In the mid-1970s the Communist leaders thought that the wind of history was filling their sails, but later in the decade their mood soured, since the Soviet Union had food problems and would rather sell its oil at world market prices. After the reduction of oil deliveries, Honecker had little choice but to turn to the FRG, much to the horror of his Moscow comrades. Published as *Risse im Bruderbund* in 2006, the volume was criticized by

<sup>57</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, New York, 1999. Reviews by Samuel Goodfellow, *GSR* 24 (2001), 255-56; Sandrine Kott, *Contemporary European History* 13 (2004), 233-47; and Eric Weitz, *CEH* 36 (2003), 490-94. Cf. my essay “Realer Sozialismus als Fürsorgediktatur. Zur begrifflichen Einordnung der DDR,” *APuZ* B20 (1998), reprinted in this volume.

<sup>58</sup> Hans-Hermann Hertle, Konrad H. Jarausch and Christoph Klessmann, eds., *Mauerbau und Mauerfall. Ursachen, Verlauf, Auswirkungen*, Berlin 2002.

Hermann Wentker of the IfZ, but praised by Gerhard Wettig for its meticulous editing and “outstanding analysis.”<sup>59</sup>

## 6. Cultural Turn

While the Cold War order was crumbling, the rise of postmodernism shook the methodological foundations of historical social science. Refuting claims to objectivity, French philosophers attacked the foundations of modernity, with Jean Francois Lyotard criticizing “grand narratives,” Jacques Derrida calling for the “deconstruction” of texts and Michel Foucault exposing the force of “discursive regimes.” Critics like Fredric Jameson picked up these concepts since they promised to go beyond literary history or Marxist reductionism. In the US the feminists Joan Scott and Lynn Hunt quickly adopted this perspective as a way of attacking male meta-narratives by exposing the gendered structure of scholarly knowledge as well as of social conventions. Other spokesmen of minorities like Blacks or Hispanics followed their lead, developing post-colonial and subaltern studies. This impulse shifted historical interests away from the social sciences back to cultural questions, largely abandoning quantitative methods in the process.<sup>60</sup>

Since German historians were slow to take up the postmodern challenge, Michael Geyer and I convened a conference in 1989 at the University of Chicago to explore its potential. Two dozen innovative US scholars like Geoff Eley, Isabel Hull or David Crew met to discuss the problem of grand narratives, the effect of the linguistic critique and the practice of social history. The starting point was a shared frustration with the constraints of Bielefeld’s *Historische Sozialwissenschaft*, fixated on the *Sonderweg*, the belief in objectivity and the structural approach. Instead the discussions pleaded for an opening to multiple narratives, exploration of subjectivities and everyday history in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the German past. When the revised essays were published in a special issue of *Central European History* traditionalists like the journal’s editor Kenneth Barkin vigorously attacked such new-fangled heresies. Michael Geyer and I responded in kind, triggering a heated controversy among Germanists in the US over the cultural turn.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Hans Hermann Hertle and Konrad H. Jarausch, eds., *Risse im Bruderbund. Die Gespräche Honecker-Breshnew 1972 bis 1982*, Berlin 2006. Reviews by Franziska Augstein, *SZ*, 23.4.2007; Hermann Wentker, *Sehepunkte* 7 (2007), Nr. 1; and Gerhard Wettig, *HSK*, 23.1.2007.

<sup>60</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “Postmodern Predicaments for Quantitative History,” in idem, Jörn Rüsen and Hans Schleier, eds., *Geschichtswissenschaft vor 2000. Perspektiven der Historiographiegeschichte, Geschichtstheorie, Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte*, Hagen 1991, 457-70.

<sup>61</sup> Michael Geyer and Konrad H. Jarausch, “German Histories: Challenges in Theory, Practice, Technique,” *CEH* 22 (1989), 22-459 (actually appearing two years later, since the

How slowly the practice of German history was responding to this methodological shift became evident in the volume *In Search of a Liberal Germany*, co-edited by Larry Jones and myself in 1990. This essay collection was an effort of some of his former students and colleagues to honor the social historian Theodore S. Hamerow at his 70th birthday by focusing on the successes and failures of German Liberalism since the French Revolution. Taking a broad view of liberalism as an outlook rather than just a succession of political parties, the volume sought to revise the notion of inevitable liberal failure, pointing instead also to moments in the 1840s, 1920s and 1950s when it had considerable power to shape politics. Nonetheless most essays fell into predictable categories, analyzing the ideology, bourgeois underpinning, repeated crises, eventual failure and surprising reemergence of Liberalism. Only two contributions by Dagmar Herzog and Thomas Childers addressed new topics such as the rise of feminism and political language.<sup>62</sup>

Another *Festschrift* for the German-Jewish historian Georg G. Iggers more clearly reflected the inroads of postmodernism into historiography. Edited by Jörn Rüsen, Hans Schleier and myself, the hefty volume *Geschichtswissenschaft vor 2000* contained the entire spectrum from *Gesellschaftsgeschichte* to the new cultural history. The introduction interpreted the crisis of historical thinking as result of the paradigm shift from modernization theory to linguistic methods which called the objectifying certainty of scientific history into question. While Rüsen, Geyer and Bo Strath supported a methodological opening, Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Wolfgang Küttler defended structural approaches. In the section on social history Jürgen Kocka maintained the utility of historical social science, while Hans Medick, Alexander von Plato or Dorothee Wierling were willing to experiment with new methods. As editors, we pleaded for a constructivist view “that has to engage the postmodern challenges, without following them uncritically.”<sup>63</sup>

The concurrent collapse of the GDR raised the question of what should remain of its historiography and its historians. To mediate a fierce controversy between critics of its subservience to the SED and defenders of its competence, I convened a conference in December 1990 at the Historische Kommission in Berlin, hoping to return discussions from name-calling to a substantive dialogue about a renewal. Bringing together East German scholars, West German

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journal had fallen behind schedule). Cf. also Kenneth A. Barkin, “Bismarck in a Postmodern World,” *GSR* 18 (1995), 241-51; and the reply by Michael Geyer and Konrad H. Jarausch, “Great Men and Postmodern Ruptures: Overcoming the Belatedness of German Historiography,” *GSR* 18 (1995), 253-73.

<sup>62</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Larry E. Jones, *In Search of a Liberal Germany: Studies in the History of German Liberalism from 1789 to the Present*, Providence 1990.

<sup>63</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, Jörn Rüsen and Hans Schleier, eds., *Geschichtswissenschaft vor 2000. Perspektiven der Historiographieggeschichte, Geschichtstheorie, Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte*, Hagen 1991, vol. 5 of *Beiträge zur Geschichtskultur*.

colleagues and American historians created a constructive atmosphere. The key problem was the strange blend of “partisanship and professionalism” that had made GDR researchers both defenders of the regime and also competent scholars. The lively discussions, covered by major newspapers, radio and TV, made it clear that personnel needed to be evaluated, curricula changed and interpretations revised. With *Zwischen Parteilichkeit und Professionalität* I tried to contribute to a moderate course. Cold warriors like Alexander Fischer accused me of whitewashing the GDR, while affected scholars like Eckhart Fuchs were skeptical that my warnings would help.<sup>64</sup>

Three years later I returned to the topic because it had become clear that Eastern self-renewal had given way to Western reconstruction. During my visiting professorship at Leipzig I had gotten to know several critical younger historians like Matthias Middell who deserved a chance to continue developing in united Germany. In the spring of 1992 we both organized a conference for these colleagues that also included a couple of researchers from the ZZF and Michael Geyer, Georg Iggers and Charles Maier from the US. The discussions found much room for condemnation, since historians had left many “white areas” unexamined and ideologically supported a brutal dictatorship. But at the same time, there was also cause for nostalgia, as the reconstruction had proceeded rigorously, often with insufficient understanding of the local context. In *Nach dem Erdbeben* I concluded that the only way to escape the cycle of condemnation and apology was to engage in a “critical historicization” of GDR history and historiography.<sup>65</sup>

Even after the conclusion of institutional restructuring GDR historiography remained a contentious issue, since it raised questions about the relationship of historians to politics in general. In response to Alexander Fischer’s condemnation, Georg Iggers and I organized a conference at the Max Planck Institut für Geschichte in Göttingen in 1996 to discuss the “abnormal normality” of the East German case. Together with Martin Sabrow and Matthias Middell, we edited the revised essays in a special issue of the *Historische Zeitschrift* that tried to “foster a deeper understanding of the contradictory nature of East German historical research.” After sketching “problem areas of critical historicization,” the volume focused on the conception of scholarship, the chronological development, and the language styles and experiences of historians. Though the former dissident Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk panned the effort in a lengthy review,

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<sup>64</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *Zwischen Parteilichkeit und Professionalität. Bilanz der Geschichtswissenschaft der DDR*, Berlin 1991 in the series Publikationen der Historischen Kommission in Berlin. Reviews by Alexander Fischer, *HZ* 260 (1995), 131-32; and Eckhardt Fuchs, *GSR* 17 (1994), 214-15.

<sup>65</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Matthias Middell, eds., *Nach dem Erdbeben. (Re-)Konstruktionen ostdeutscher Geschichte und Geschichtswissenschaft*, Leipzig 1994. Review by Alexander Fischer, *HZ* 261 (1995), 655-56.

the volume did ultimately contribute to moving the topic from political condemnation to academic research.<sup>66</sup>

Even more controversial was the overdue confrontation with the involvement of historians in the Nazi dictatorship that erupted at the Frankfurt *Historikertag* of 1998. The angry debate tended to confuse three different temporal horizons – the collaboration of leading scholars like Werner Conze and Theodor Schieder with the Third Reich, their tendency to maintain silence about their transgressions after 1945, and the alleged methodological “brown roots” of the *Historische Sozialwissenschaft*. To untangle these issues, the social historian Rüdiger Hohls and I hit upon the idea of sending current students to interview the post-war generation of scholars about the questions which these had failed to ask of their mentors, either due to their dependence upon them or their concentration on a new beginning. Published first on HSK and then in print as *Versäumte Fragen*, the answers attracted much attention in the profession and the media out of personal curiosity and analytical interest. Reviewers found the concept “ingenious” and strongly recommended the book.<sup>67</sup>

In order to reflect on the tasks of historical writing in the present, I then tried to initiate a debate on the big interpretations of German history. At the historical congress in Aachen of 2000 Martin Sabrow and I convened a session around the postmodern concept of “master narratives,” initially suggested by Lyotard in order to distinguish the tales of owners and slaves. At the beginning of the new millennium all major versions of narrating the German past seemed equally discredited: The nationalist narrative so had disastrously failed with the Third Reich that it could hardly be salvaged; the Marxist interpretation of the GDR had collapsed with Communism; even the self-critical *Sonderweg* thesis of the Federal Republic was being undercut by comparative research. But unfortunately alternatives such as the Holocaust, feminist and global history also had serious limitations. Published as *Die historische Meistererzählung* in 2002, these essays were generally welcomed by reviewers as an opening for “plural and interdependent narratives.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Georg G. Iggers, Konrad H. Jarausch, Matthias Middell and Martin Sabrow, eds., “Die DDR-Geschichtswissenschaft als Forschungsproblem,” *HZ*, Beiheft 27, Munich 1998. Review by Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk, *HSK*, 19.5.1999. My contribution “Historische Texte der DDR aus der Perspektive des linguistic turn,” 112-133, reprinted in this volume, was the high point of my exploration of postmodernism.

<sup>67</sup> Rüdiger Hohls and Konrad H. Jarausch, eds., *Versäumte Fragen: Deutsche Historiker im Schatten des Nationalsozialismus*, Stuttgart 2000. Reviews by Richard J. Evans, *taz*, 8.8.2000; Manfred Hettling, *Die Zeit*, 27.7.2000; Christoph Jahr, *NZZ*, 23.9.2000; and Philipp Stelzel, *literaturkritik.de*, 11.11.2001.

<sup>68</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Martin Sabrow, eds., *Die historische Meistererzählung. Deutungslinien der deutschen Nationalgeschichte nach 1945*, Göttingen 2002. Reviews by Frank Ebbinghaus, *SZ* 4.12.2002; Robert Moeller, *CEH* 37 (2004), 461-65; and Philipp Stelzel, *literaturkritik.de*, 12.12.2003. My own contribution, “Die Krise der nationalen Meisterer-

The memory boom of media retrospectives, museum exhibitions and memorial presentations also demanded a response from academic historians, since it threatened to undercut their authority. Hence, in 2001 Martin Sabrow and I organized a conference at the ZZF on “historicizing the present” so as to address the conflict between memory culture and contemporary history. Hans Günter Hockerts and I discussed the growing competition for public attention between “eye-witnesses” and scholars, while Martin Sabrow and Ralph Jessen stressed the important impact of personal experience on interpretation. Other essays reflected on literature, public ritual and political instrumentalization of memory. The book’s title *Verletztes Gedächtnis* referred to Paul Ricoeur’s concept of “injured memory” so as to dramatize that in the German case individual recollections and collective remembrances were deeply traumatized by past catastrophes. Suggesting further directions for research, Jan Holger Kirsch nonetheless called the volume “a welcome addition.”<sup>69</sup>

My major effort to pull all these strands of methodological reflection together was *The Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories*. The book was the product of a fortuitous intellectual collaboration with Michael Geyer, who shared a German background and an American perspective with me. Unfortunately the illness of his wife Miriam Hansen delayed the publication and made the distribution of the actual writing more unequal than originally intended. As a result our intervention became post-postmodern, i.e. it gained enough distance from the postmodern challenge to incorporate its innovative impulses without accepting its faddish excesses. We both collaborated on the introduction and conclusion, I ended up writing the three historiographical essays on the grand narratives, while Michael supplied the Holocaust and consumption chapters and I covered the rest from dictatorship, foreign policy, migration, identity, and women to memory. Our purpose was to break out of the straightjacket of the Bielefeld school not by supplying a new synthesis, but by a set of exemplary essays that showed a multivocal approach.<sup>70</sup>

The book’s ambitious aim of decentering narratives of 20th century German history produced a rather mixed response, because traditionalists resented the emphasis on fragmentation while innovative scholars welcomed its pluralism. On the one hand, the economic historian Gerald Feldman blurted out at a reception in Berlin: “How could you do this to me, Konrad?” In a summary attack on postmodernism, the German-Polish historian William Hagen accused the authors of showing “glowing traces of nationalist and National Socialist rhetoric

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zählungen Ein Plädoyer für plurale, interdependente Narrative” 140-62 is reprinted in this volume.

<sup>69</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Martin Sabrow, eds., *Verletztes Gedächtnis. Erinnerungskultur und Zeitgeschichte im Konflikt*, Frankfurt 2002. Review by Jan-Holger Kirsch, *HSK* 21.10.2002.

<sup>70</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories*, Princeton 2003.

and worldview” – a charge which he later had to retract. Though calling for more attention to economics, post-nationalism, and culture, Eric Weitz, on the other hand, pronounced the work “the most important book in German history to appear in recent years.” Robert G. Moeller concluded that “prompting us to think critically is a major contribution.” Due to “the new debates and research it will be undoubtedly inspire” Stephen Remy predicted that the book would be a mainstay of graduate seminars.<sup>71</sup>

The German reception of the translation *Zerbrochener Spiegel* was more muted, because it seemed overly ambitious for two transatlantic historians “to initiate a reconceptualization of German histories in the 20th century.” Since most chaired professors tended to resist their implications, postmodern currents had only reached some of the younger generation in Germany. Part of the reason was the delay in translation, since the initial translator failed to deliver. Friedrich Griesse, who ultimately took on the task, provided a beautiful rendering of American arguments into academic German. Another part was the reluctance of colleagues to accept a plurality of narratives, since Edgar Wolfrum stressed the importance of “a chronological and genetic coherence, which creates connections.” Moreover, traditionalists like Carsten Kretschmann in the *FAZ* complained that the authors “time and again blur the boundaries between historical analysis and political journalism.” Nonetheless, *Shattered Past* did win the HSK book prize for contemporary history in 2004.<sup>72</sup>

## 7. Transnational History

Around the turn of the 21st century pressure also grew to break out of the confines of national history by putting the German problem into a wider perspective. Already the leaders of the Bielefeld school had pushed comparative approaches in order to substantiate their thesis of Germany’s special path. The process of European integration added a further impetus to go beyond the bilateral school-book conferences and embed German developments more strongly in a general continental context. Countless conferences at the European University Institute, several publication series and the new journal *Modern European History* promoted a widening consciousness, though the practical effects

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<sup>71</sup> William W. Hagen, “Master Narratives beyond Postmodernity: Germany’s ‘Separate Path’ in Historiographical-Philosophical Light,” *CEH* 30 (2007), 1-32; and Michael Geyer and Konrad H. Jarausch, “Reply to William W. Hagen,” *ibid.*, 242. Reviews by Peter Black, *GSR* 27 (2004), 669-70; Robert Moeller, *CEH* 37 (2004), 461-65; Steven P. Remy, *H-German*, September 2003; and Eric Weitz, *Slavic Review* 63 (2004), 150-51.

<sup>72</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Zerbrochener Spiegel. Deutsche Geschichten im 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 2005. Reviews by Carsten Kretschmann, *FAZ*, 30.12.2006; and Edgar Wolfrum, *Die Zeit*, 10.11.2005.



of this agitation remained somewhat disappointing.<sup>73</sup> The younger generation preferred global history instead, exploring the interconnections with the wider world, even if the post-colonial perspective remained limited by the episodic nature of Germany's colonies. These diverse impulses inspired a somewhat inconclusive debate about how to transnationalize history.<sup>74</sup>

In order to break the hold of the nation state on contemporary historians, I helped initiate a couple of initiatives to broaden the focus to Europe. In the US minority activists increasingly accused European historians as presenting an apologia for the hegemony of "dead, white, European males." As counter to the turn to the Third World, the political scientist Gary Marks and I founded the Center for European Studies at the University of North Carolina in 1994 and served as its first co-directors. With the help of the able administrator Ruth Mitchell Pitts, we succeeded in obtaining Title VI funding from the Federal Government and became the North American anchor for the EU centers.<sup>75</sup> In Germany, a similar effort at Europeanizing contemporary history was necessary in order to dramatize the degree to which developments increasingly cut across frontiers. After forming a reading group on this topic, the ZZF played a leading role in the creation of the EURHISTXX network that organized several conferences, but failed to obtain EU funding.<sup>76</sup>

This wider view inspired the interpretative synthesis of post-war history, *Die Umkehr. Deutsche Wandlungen 1945-1995*, published in 2004. This book tried to answer the question of how a country that had committed the barbarity of the Holocaust once again become civilized after 1945. My thesis was that this transformation of political culture was the result of a societal learning process, promoted by the Western allies and a minority of democratic Germans in three stages: First, in the post-war decade the defeated were compelled to demilitarize, denationalize and decartelize. Second, in the sixties the West Germans modernized themselves by accepting the West, internalizing democracy and getting used to protest. Third, in the late eighties, the East Germans rebelled, and united Germany became normalized, facing problems of migration and multiculturalism. From a transatlantic perspective, this book proposed an original interpretation that presented a "critical transformation history," which also sought to integrate experiences from East and West.<sup>77</sup>

Though somewhat partisan, the reception of the book was generally quite positive. The political historian Andreas Rödger in the *FAZ* was rather critical, objecting to the use of personal sources and focusing on the value change after

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<sup>73</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, "Zeitgeschichte zwischen Nation und Europa. Eine transnationale Herausforderung," *APuZ* B39, 2004, reprinted in this volume.

<sup>74</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, "Reflections on Transnational History," *H-German Forum*, January 2006; and *HSK-Forum*, "Transnationale Geschichte. Eine Zwischenbilanz," 10.10.2006.

<sup>75</sup> <<http://www.unc.edu/depts/europe/>>.

<sup>76</sup> <<http://www.eurhistxx.de/>>.

<sup>77</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *Die Umkehr. Deutsche Wandlungen 1945-1995*, Munich 2004.

1970 while ignoring its antecedents. The reviewers in *Die Zeit*, *Frankfurter Rundschau* und *Süddeutsche Zeitung* were more generous, recognizing the interpretation as “thoughtful,” appreciating the “mixture of distance and sympathy,” and calling the portrayal of the reorientation “impressive.” The British scholar Christoph Vietzke, praised the “readable and at the same time analytically sophisticated approach to interpreting German postwar history.” The Cologne international historian Jost Dülffer waxed even more euphoric, judging the book to be “a great accomplishment” due to its argumentative richness and commitment to the values of civil society. The Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung bought several thousand copies and the HSK judges awarded it the contemporary history prize in 2005.<sup>78</sup>

By founding the new journal *Zeithistorische Forschungen* in 2004 I also sought to make contemporary history more innovative, interdisciplinary and international. Since the *VfZ* represented the more traditional political approach of the *IfZ*, largely centered on the Third Reich, the *ZZF* entry shifted the time-frame forward from 1945 to 1990 and focused on the second German dictatorship in social and cultural perspective. With its hybrid print and on-line publication, the new journal self-consciously made use of the possibilities of the media-age by including images and linkages to HSK as well as the *ZZF* website. Influenced by the iconic turn, the content ranged from traditional articles and debates, to novel categories like “classics reread,” exhibition discussions and film reviews, using pictures not just as decoration but also as source. Under the energetic editorship of Jan-Holger Kirsch, *ZF* quickly gained a reputation as an interesting journal of younger historians. My own contribution to the first issue was a programmatic article on the need to integrate East and West histories.<sup>79</sup>

Exploring the cultural process of “inner democratization” in West Germany after 1945, the volume on *Demokratiewunder* was another product of the transnational perspective. Together with Arndt Bauerkämper and Markus Payk, I had organized a conference in the American Academy in Berlin to discuss how skeptical Germans actually internalized democratic values and behaviors. It became quickly clear that both American and German mediators played a central role in the process, since ideas did not just float from the West into the Federal Republic, but were brought in and popularized by influential individuals. We therefore looked at members of the occupation forces, German intellectuals, and political scientists as well as schools. Though warning against a

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<sup>78</sup> Reviews by Jost Dülffer, *literaturkritik.de*, 4.4.2005; Andreas Rödder, *FAZ*, 19.10.2004; Elke Schubert, *FR*, 27.1.2005; Axel Schildt, *Die Zeit*, 11.11.2004; Christoph Vietzke, *AfS*, December 2005; and Godehard Weyerer, *SZ*, 12.10.2004.

<sup>79</sup> Editorial of *Zeithistorische Forschungen*. *Studies in Contemporary History*, Göttingen 2004 ff. For the online edition see: <<http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/>>. Cf. Andrew I. Port, “A New Journal for our Time?” *H-German*, July 2009.

simplified “success story,” Kaspar Maase welcomed the “innovative nature” of approaching “a democratization history via mentality and everyday life.” Reinhild Kreis also praised “the potential of a culture and *mentalité* approach to the analysis of democratization.”<sup>80</sup>

Next I tried to correct Anglo-American disinterest in Germany’s postwar rehabilitation by publishing *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995*. Annoyed by superficial media references, I was concerned that the preoccupation with the Third Reich and the Holocaust had created a historical stereotype which failed to appreciate how much Germans had changed since the end of the World War II. To make my counterargument about a widespread learning process accessible to an English speaking public, I asked my former student Brandon Hunziker to translate *Die Umkehr*, and reworked the text by writing a new preface, responding to some reviewers’ criticisms, and updating the references. While Mary Fulbrook remained somewhat lukewarm, Neil Gregor called it “a marvelous book, full of ideas, which will challenge readers of all persuasions to rethink their positions on almost a page-by-page basis.” Students seem to agree with him, because they have been reading *After Hitler* and discussing it with enthusiasm.<sup>81</sup>

When my directorship at the ZZF in Potsdam ended with my 65th birthday, I returned to the University of North Carolina in the fall of 2006. I was touched that the institute organized a symposium on the history of sports as a farewell and that so many well-wishers came to see me off at the Haus für Brandenburg-Preussische Geschichte. Moreover, Jürgen Danyel, Jan-Holger Kirsch and Martin Sabrow were kind enough to dedicate a book on *50 Klassiker der Zeitgeschichte* to me in appreciation for my engagement in their behalf. In Washington, the Friends of the German Historical Institute also organized a symposium in my honor, where my co-director Christoph Kleßmann and former student Elizabeth Heinemann showered me with embarrassing praise.<sup>82</sup> Since holding two positions had been rather taxing, it was a relief no longer to commute across the Atlantic. But because I was not forced to retire automatically in

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<sup>80</sup> Arndt Bauerkämper, Konrad H. Jarausch and Markus M. Payk, eds., *Demokratiewunder. Transatlantische Mittler und die kulturelle Öffnung Westdeutschlands 1945-1970*, Göttingen 2005. Reviews by Kaspar Maase, *HSK*, 25.11.2005; and Reinhild Kreis, *Sehepunkte* 6 (2006), Nr. 9.

<sup>81</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995*, New York 2006. Reviews by Frank Biess, *German History* 26 (2008), 331-33; Mary Fulbrook, *AHR* 113 (2008), 600-01; Neil Gregor, *JMH* 81 (2009), 478-79; Arthur Gunlicks, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 22 (2008), 234-50; Robert Moeller, *EHR* 123 (2008), 1325-27; and Gerhard Weinberg, *JIH* 38 (2007), 291-93. In *H-German*, January 2007, Dieter K. Buse concluded: “Jarausch provides the best basis thus far for reflecting on the positive transformation of, historically, one of the world’s most problematic countries.”

<sup>82</sup> Jürgen Danyel, Jan-Holger Kirsch and Martin Sabrow, eds., *50 Klassiker der Zeitgeschichte*, Göttingen 2007. Cf. also the laudations by Christoph Kleßmann and by Elizabeth Heinemann, November 17, 2006, in the GHI bulletin.

the US, I continued to teach a large lecture on 20th century Europe and mentor doctoral students at UNC.

The return to idyllic Chapel Hill provided time to finish some book projects, started at the ZZF but not completed there. The first was the volume on *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories* which I co-edited with Thomas Lindenberger in 2007. It grew out of the discussions of the EUR-HISTXX network about an alternative framework to the prevailing European enthusiasm of German intellectuals. Instead of trying to gloss over historical differences, the essays started with the memory conflicts, proceeded to look at the divisive impact of wars, then examined transnational interactions, and concluded by reflecting on the difficult process of integration. This reversal of perspectives hoped to contribute a critical voice to the discussions about the preamble of a European constitution which suggested harmony where the actual past had been confrontational. Shannon Nagy highly recommended the volume as “an excellent tool for historians” and “a refreshing framework in which European history can be studied.”<sup>83</sup>

In another programmatic volume *Das Ende der Zuversicht?* I sought to stimulate a historical debate about the roots of the new problems, facing the 21st century. In conjunction with a social science fellowship at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin, I organized a conference with my former colleagues at the ZZF on the 1970s as transitional epoch in order to establish a vantage point beyond 1989/90. In my view, the oil shock recession was not just a business cycle problem, but the end of the thirty-year post-war boom signaled the structural transition from the second to the third stage of the industrial revolution, shifting from production to services. Due to globalization, the statistical evidence showed both massive deindustrialization in traditional sectors like textiles, mining and ship-building as well as the spread high technology in computers, industrial robots, and communication. Together with the long essay by Anselm Doering-Manteuffel and Lutz Raphael this collection refocused the debate by initiating a “problem-oriented pre-history of the present.”<sup>84</sup>

Back in the US, I also got involved in an innovative project to make German Historical Documents and Images available to a transatlantic public. It was the director of the GHI in Washington Christof Mauch who persuaded the Max Kade and Gerd Bucerius Foundations to provide more reliable content on the

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<sup>83</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Thomas Lindenberger, eds., *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories*, New York 2007, pb. ed. 2011. Review by Shannon Nagy, *H-German*, November 2009. This initiative inspired the establishment of a series of studies on Contemporary European Histories with Berghahn Books, co-edited by Henry Rousso and myself.

<sup>84</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *Das Ende der Zuversicht? Die siebziger Jahre als Geschichte*, Göttingen 2008; and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel and Lutz Raphael, *Nach dem Boom. Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte seit 1970*, Göttingen 2008. Reviews by Nils Freytag, *HSK*, 26.3.2009; and Matthias Peter, *Sehepunkte*, 9 (2009), Nr. 11.

German past to the users surfing the internet. The steering committee of the Friends of the GHI to which I belonged decided to divide Central European history into ten electronic volumes from 1500 to the present, each edited by a renowned scholar like Volker Berghahn or Roger Chickering. The entire collection was presented in the German original and in English translation, with each volume opened with a brief introduction and each document glossed as to its content and provenance. As project manager Kelly McCullough not only collated all contributions, but also stressed the importance of adding multiple images. The result was a rich resource, appealing to teachers preparing lessons and students writing papers.<sup>85</sup>

Drawing on my ZZF experience, I co-edited the final two volumes on 1961 to 1989 and 1990 to 2009 with the political scientist Helga A. Welsh. While she looked for political speeches, laws and treaties, I was more inclined to include intellectual commentary and statements of personal experience. We ultimately decided on a mixed chronological and topical approach, ranging in volume IX from the building of the Wall to the GDR opposition and in volume X from the Democratic Awakening to the Grand Coalition. Within the 16 chapters before 1989 we alternated between East and West German documents whenever the topic required and included separate chapters on “Germany in Europe” in both volumes. Working on a media age, we had no difficulty in finding over 250 photographs for volume IX and almost 300 for volume X – providing not only dry texts but also captivating images that made issues come alive. In sessions at the GSA and AHA conferences, these volumes received much positive feedback from their users.<sup>86</sup>

## 8. New Plurality

With the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, contemporary historians concerned with Germany have been developing greater tolerance for different approaches and interpretations. The reemergence of a new political and international history complemented the established social, everyday and cultural perspectives on the past. The growing temporal distance to the caesura of 1990 led to forays into a “history of the present” beyond the collapse of Communism, adding a third time period to the traditional focus on the Third Reich and the newer post-war history. Moreover, scholars were not only exploring the multiple possibilities of the web with a “Docupedia Zeitgeschichte,” but also making the process of medialization itself a subject for

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<sup>85</sup> For an overview see “About the GHDI” on <<http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/index.cfm>>.

<sup>86</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Helga A. Welsh, eds., “Two Germanies (1961-1989),” volume IX, and “One Germany in Europe (1989-2009),” volume X of *German Historical Documents and Images*, <[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/section.cfm?section\\_id=15](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/section.cfm?section_id=15)> and <[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/section.cfm?section\\_id=16](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/section.cfm?section_id=16)>.

research and reflection.<sup>87</sup> Finally, the inclusion of the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung, the Georg Eckert Institut (Braunschweig) and the Institut für Europäische Geschichte (Mainz) into the WGL also improved cooperation with the Institut für Zeitgeschichte by creating a plurality of institutions in the field.

As a result of this new freedom I finally dared to confront the legacy of my own father by editing his World War Two letters from the Eastern Front. In spite of my mother's wishes, I had initially balked at the task, since I found his Prussian Protestant politics insufferable. I only changed my mind when Klaus J. Arnold, a young specialist on the Russian war, found the letters fascinating and the Schöningh Verlag agreed to publish them. He laboriously transcribed the texts, we selected about 350 of them to create a "letter diary," I wrote a personal introduction based on my father's publications and he added an appraisal of their military significance. The chief value of the correspondence consisted of its shocking descriptions of the mass death of Russian POWs and increasing expressions of doubt about the justification of the war. Published as *Das stille Sterben* in 2008, the letters came too late for the World War II media boom, but reviewers like Markus Roth and Christian Hartmann called the edition "a great achievement."<sup>88</sup>

By co-editing a volume on *Gebrochene Wissenschaftskulturen* that discussed the troubled relationship between politics and scholarship, I also returned to the history of higher education. The 450th anniversary of the founding of Jena and the bicentenary of the Humboldt Universität inspired an effort to transcend the self-congratulatory genre of institutional *Festschriften*. Michael Grüttner, Rüdiger Hachtmann, Jürgen John, Matthias Middell and I organized a conference at Jena to discuss the connection between political ruptures and institutional reorientations in the 20th century. We decided on a different chronology, creating blocs of 1900-1929, 1930-1948, 1949-1989 and 1990 to 2009, and looked beyond academic self-images into actual practices. My final section focused both on the painful reconstruction of East German institutions and on the debate about how to reform the higher education system of united Germany. The critics appreciated this joint effort, calling it "a substantive volume of considerable thematic as well as methodological interest."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> For the current discussion on contemporary history see the articles in *Francia* 38 (2011), 237-320 Cf. also Docupedia Zeitgeschichte, sponsored by the ZZf, <<http://docupedia.de/zg/>>.

<sup>88</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Klaus Jochen Arnold, eds., "*Das stille Sterben....*" *Feldpostbriefe von Konrad Jarausch aus Polen und Russland 1939-1942*, Paderborn 2008. Reviews by Christian J. Hartmann, *Sehepunkte* 10 (2010), Nr. 9; and Markus Roth, *Wissenschaftlicher Literaturanzeiger*, 25.9.2008.

<sup>89</sup> Michael Grüttner, Rüdiger Hachtmann, Konrad Jarausch, Jürgen John and Matthias Middell, eds., *Gebrochene Wissenschaftskulturen. Universität und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2010. Cf. Reviews by Rainer Nicolayse, *AJS* 1.7.2011; and Till Kinzel, *Informationsmittel*, 2011.

More by accident, I also got involved in co-editing the volume on *Children, Families and States* which compared the time policies of European countries towards childcare and early education. The feminist historian Karen Hagemann took the lead in exploring the exceptionalism of the German half-day model, which even prevailed somewhat in the GDR. I endorsed her VW application and held the first international and interdisciplinary conference in Potsdam while the comparative educationist Cristina Allemann-Ghionda hosted the second meeting at Cologne. The results of this partly historical, partly social scientific enterprise were fascinating: Early leaders in compulsory schooling like the German speaking states got stuck in a half-day pattern, socially reformist countries like Scandinavia and France developed a full-day model, while neoliberal societies like Britain developed a mixed version. Receiving some government support, this collection sought to bolster the case for introducing the full-day model in the FRG.<sup>90</sup>

The support of Brigitta van Rheinberg, editor in chief of Princeton University Press, encouraged me also to publish an English language edition of my father's letters as *Reluctant Accomplice* in 2011. In this version, I rewrote the introduction, adding the effect of the memory cult on my own adolescence, and writing the military history sections myself. To tighten the text, my former student Eve Duffy selected and translated somewhat fewer letters, but found a marvelous voice for them. Surprisingly enough, public interest was greater in the US, since the *Chronicle of Higher Education* ran a long review, Dick Gordon of the American Public Media program "This is the Story" picked it up and the University of North Carolina Alumni Magazine published a feature article, combining quotations and an interview. Especially Jewish critics were fascinated by the "revealing glimpse into the mind of a patriotic German who was skeptical of the Nazi leadership," calling the edition "thought provoking in its ambiguities."<sup>91</sup>

During the academic year 2010 to 2011, I returned to Berlin to teach at the Free University, to which I had become attached through participating in chairing its fellowship seminar. With the help of the DAAD, the public historian Paul Nolte traded places with me, teaching my students in Chapel Hill while I offered his courses in Berlin. It was fun to lecture in English, do a seminar in

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<sup>90</sup> Karen Hagemann, Konrad H. Jarausch and Cristina Allemann-Ghionda, eds., *Children, Families and States. Time Policies of Childcare, Preschool, and Primary Education in Europe*, New York 2011. Cf. Karen Hagemann and Monika Matthes, "Ganztagserziehung im deutsch-deutschen Vergleich," as well as Konrad H. Jarausch and Cristina Allemann-Ghionda, "Die Zeitpolitik der Kinderbetreuung und Grundschulernziehung," *APuZ* B23 (2008).

<sup>91</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *Reluctant Accomplice: A Wehrmacht Soldier's Letters from the Eastern Front*, Princeton 2011. Cf. Evan R. Goldstein, "A Troubling Legacy Unfolded," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 1, 2011; Sheldon Kirshner in *Canadian Jewish News*; and Adam Kirsch, "Ordinary People" *Tablet*, July 26, 2011.

public history and to talk about an integrated post-war history to a mixed audience of students and retirees. Especially the latter, calling themselves “bald eagles” due to their white hair and stooped posture, enjoyed a dispassionate transatlantic view. Moreover, the weekly colloquium made it possible to invite a mixture of promising PhD students and leaders in the field like the new IfZ director Andreas Wirsching. As a result of my presence in Berlin, I was ironically asked to represent the German perspective on the peaceful revolution in a series of international conferences in Cotonou, Jerusalem and Cairo.

At present I am involved in a handful of projects which in different ways try to gather in the intellectual harvest of five decades of scholarship. Already in press is the third volume of the bicentennial *Geschichte der Universität unter den Linden*, once the leading institution in the world whose fate was intimately tied to German politics. Since my father had obtained his PhD there, I agreed to take on the GDR period and its aftermath from 1945 to 2000. To present a plurality of views, I asked East and West German scholars such as Reimer Hansen, Annette Vogt, Matthias Middell, and Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk to write the earlier chapters, while I chose the thankless task of analyzing the transformation from 1985 to 2000. Though disregard for deadlines and excessive length made the editing exasperating, I enjoyed being back in the archives and exploring a controversial topic hardly touched by research. To cool the heated emotions I tried to balance sympathy for the pain incurred with insistence on the need for fundamental change.<sup>92</sup>

Currently in production is also a volume on *United Germany* which the publisher Marion Berghahn proposed at a GSA meeting in Oakland of 2010. Following on the heels of the twentieth anniversary celebrations of the peaceful revolution, this venture tries to respond to a public and academic need for reliable information about the impact of unification on German affairs during the past two decades. Since judgments differ according to personal experience and ideological outlook, I asked East and West Germans to share their impressions as well as Americans to evaluate their respective claims. Moreover, I assembled an interdisciplinary team of authors from political science, history and cultural studies so as to illuminate the subject through different methodologies. The essays, written by leading specialists in their field, address the transfer of institutions, the economic crisis, the social adjustment of women, the cultural debates and finally also the changes in foreign policy. The result is a mixed

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<sup>92</sup> The project was split into three institutional volumes and three history of science volumes. Cf. Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, ed., *Selbstbehauptung einer Vision*, vol. 6 of *Geschichte der Universität unter den Linden. Praxis ihrer Disziplinen*, Berlin 2010. Volume 3 will appear in 2012.



balance sheet of developments of the last two decades, offering a comprehensive view of the new Germany in Europe.<sup>93</sup>

Another volume with the provocative title “Good Germans?” that is still being assembled seeks to rectify the negative stereotyping of Germany among Anglo-American intellectuals. Based on papers presented during the 25th anniversary of the Berlin fellowship program in 2011, which has brought over 250 students of history, politics and culture to the Free University, as long-time member of the selection committee I am co-editing this collection with Karin Goihl, its administrator, Harald Wenzel, its current chair. While the volume does not dispute any of the justifiably problematic associations with Germany, it does seek to rebalance the books by recovering what foreign observers found interesting and attractive before 1933. After the war there is also a story of exemplary recovery to be analyzed. Moreover, with the economic miracle, European integration and the overthrow of Communism, the “German model” was once again referred to as an example to be emulated.<sup>94</sup> By teasing out such constructive aspects, the volume seeks to add more nuance to the picture.

The big challenge with which I am now wrestling is a reinterpretation of 20th century European History, entitled “Taming Modernity.” After decades of teaching I have become frustrated with the problematic syntheses by Mark Mazower or Tony Judt and feel the need to state my own views. The starting point is the European exceptionalism which led to imperial domination of the globe, descended into catastrophe through the World Wars and Holocaust, but after 1945 recovered a surprising measure of civility. The protean concept which contemporaries used to express this sense of dynamism was “modernity.” Instead of reviving discredited modernization theory, I am exploring the competition of Liberal, Communist and Fascist modernities in order to explain why a chastened version of democracy ultimately triumphed. Though the US twice had to rescue the old continent from its own quarrels, I believe that in the meantime the Europeans have become a credible alternative to America in terms of peace, prosperity and equality.<sup>95</sup>

The final project that is just emerging is a collection of essays on representations and memorializations of the Cold War, growing out of a conference in Berlin in the summer of 2011. During the discussions about improving the commemoration of the Wall, Markus Meckel and I hit upon the idea to construct a Cold War Museum at Checkpoint Charlie in order to present a sophisti-

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<sup>93</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *United Germany: Processes, Problems and Prospects*, New York 2013. Cf. idem “Germany 1989: A New Type of Revolution?” in Marc Silberman, ed., *The German Wall: Fallout in Europe*, New York, 2011, 11-35.

<sup>94</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, Harald Wenzel and Karin Goihl, eds., “Good Germans? New Transatlantic Perspectives,” forthcoming in the *Spektrum* series of the German Studies Association, New York, 2013.

<sup>95</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *Taming Modernity: European Experiences in the 20th century* is one quarter completed and scheduled to appear with Princeton University Press in 2014.

cated alternative to the current exhibition of escape devices. For half a decade a preparatory group has discussed plans, held several international conferences, and constituted an advisory board and an association which I chair. Tourists were so interested in the picture gallery around the actual site, showing the interconnection of international tensions and local confrontations, that the Senate decided to authorize a feasibility study and the construction of an information “black box.” This project seeks to communicate the dangers of Cold War confrontations to the younger generation and inform an international audience about how they were finally overcome.<sup>96</sup>

Since a seventieth birthday is a sobering reminder that one’s life is finite, in some essays I have also started to set an agenda which I shall no longer be able to undertake myself. No doubt, the shadows of the Nazi past will continue to demand scholarly attention, especially in a transnational East European context. Moreover, a truly integrated post-war history that blends East with West German experiences still remains to be written.<sup>97</sup> But even more exciting is the opening of research into the last two decades that calls for a different prehistory of the problems of the present. The chief challenge consists of analyzing the structural transformation, beginning in the 1970s, that is often somewhat misleadingly labeled as “globalization.” Concretely that means addressing the competitiveness of advanced welfare states and the democratic participation in bureaucratic decision-making. Dealing with these issues requires a more systematic effort to place the German question within the context of Europe and the wider world.<sup>98</sup>

## 9. Retrospective Reflections

Looking back at the course of my scholarly life reveals an amazing trajectory, unfolding in unplanned but interesting directions. To be true, I have also experienced my share of disappointments in not getting positions, rejected grant applications or unwarranted criticism. In spite of some regrettable errors, I have been able to do much writing, speaking before audiences in several continents,

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<sup>96</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “Die Teilung Europas und ihre Überwindung. Überlegungen zu einem Ausstellungskonzept für Berlin,” *ZF* 5 (2008), Nr. 2. The planned volume will be co-edited by Christian Ostermann, director of the Cold War International History Project in Washington, DC, Andreas Etges, professor at the John F. Kennedy Institut at the FU and myself.

<sup>97</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “‘Die Teile als Ganzes erkennen...’ Zur Integration der beiden deutschen Nachkriegsgeschichten,” *ZF* 1 (2004), 11-30, reprinted in this volume, describes the challenge. For a subsequent debate with my statement “Divided, Yet Reunited – The Challenge of Integrating German Post-War Histories,” see *H-German*, January-February 2011.

<sup>98</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “Beyond the National Narrative: Implications of Unification for Recent German History,” *German History* 28 (2010), 498-514, reprinted in this volume; and idem, “Demokratie in der Globalisierung. Zeitgeschichte als Historisierung der Gegenwart,” *Francia* 38 (2011), 311-20.

and teaching in institutions on both sides of the Atlantic. It has been especially gratifying to work with four dozen talented PhD students, which have like Elizabeth Heineman, Thomas Pegelow or Adam Seipp acquired considerable reputations of their own. None of this would have been possible without the generous funding by foundations and the patient cooperation of colleagues some of which I tried to acknowledge in the preceding pages. But part of the reason was also my dogged persistence, willingness to work hard and penchant for taking intellectual risks. The largely positive response to my efforts has made the process quite rewarding in the end.

The one constant in all the changing themes and expanding methods has been the dynamic development of contemporary history during the past half century. Investigating the diplomatic response to Hitler or German responsibility for the outbreak of the World War I required political answers. Addressing the social causes of academic illiberalism and the NS-collaboration of professionals demanded mastering quantitative methods. Providing a nuanced understanding of the SED-dictatorship necessitated creating an alternative to totalitarianism theory that reconciled repression with everyday life. Analyzing the competing master narratives of the fragmented past entailed engaging post-modern techniques of the cultural turn. Embedding German developments within wider European or global contexts called for a transnational vision.... Throughout this stimulating succession of topics and approaches I have insisted on taking a longer temporal view, using a comparative approach and maintaining a balanced judgment.

Due to my German cultural background and American academic career, I have gradually grown into the role of a transatlantic mediator among historians. Working in two contexts has posed a double task: On the one hand, I had to explain the vagaries of the German past to a US audience by providing information on important issues and questioning stereotypes. On the other hand, I could also try to transfer some American methodological innovations to a German public in order to strengthen its progressive tendencies. In practice, this intellectual position has created endless problems of translation and re-contextualization. Transposing a text from one setting to another was rarely sufficient, since institutional structures, intellectual styles and substantive concerns tended to differ on both sides. Often enough this resulted in a double marginality which felt like working from the sunken continent of Atlantis. But beyond logistical aggravations, there were also moments of gratifying successes in enhancing mutual understanding.

Since scholarship is a collective enterprise, I have also accepted the responsibility of offering time-consuming service to the profession. In order to advance German Studies in the US, I have participated in fellowship selections, reviewed manuscripts, written tenure letters, been on editorial boards, co-founded a Center for European Studies and coordinated a publication series. I have also chaired professional associations such as the German Studies Associ-

ation, Conference Group for Central European History, Friends of the German Historical Institute and so on. So as to contribute to the development of historical debates in Germany, I have co-organized the electronic network HSK, founded the journal *Zeithistorische Forschungen* and co-directed the ZZF. Finally, I have communicated with the public on both sides through talks, radio interviews and occasional newspaper articles. In these efforts I have tried to help younger colleagues and tolerate views differing from my own. The reward has been an extraordinarily rich experience.

Throughout these multiple efforts I have attempted to advance contemporary history as a critical perspective for illuminating current problems. Atmospheric descriptions of journalists and systematic interpretations of social scientists can only suggest a preliminary orientation in a rapidly changing world, since they work with incomplete information and remain focused on the present. Due to their somewhat longer temporal perspective, additional primary sources, and critical method, contemporary historians can develop somewhat firmer interpretations, thereby countering many myths advanced by special interests, politicians and the media.<sup>99</sup> While post-modern theoreticians correctly warn that “objectivity” leading to “ultimate truth” is humanly inattainable, the intersubjectivity produced by rigorous debate is a worthy approximation to it. Only by combining rational inquiry with humane compassion will we be able to heed some of the lessons of the 20th century in order to advance human rights, strengthen international peace, defend social solidarity and attain ecological sustainability.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Christoph Klessmann, “Zeitgeschichte als wissenschaftliche Aufklärung,” *APuZ*, 23.6.2008.

<sup>100</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, “German Civility? Rethinking Social Bonds after Barbarism,” *European Review of History* 18 (2011), 373-86.